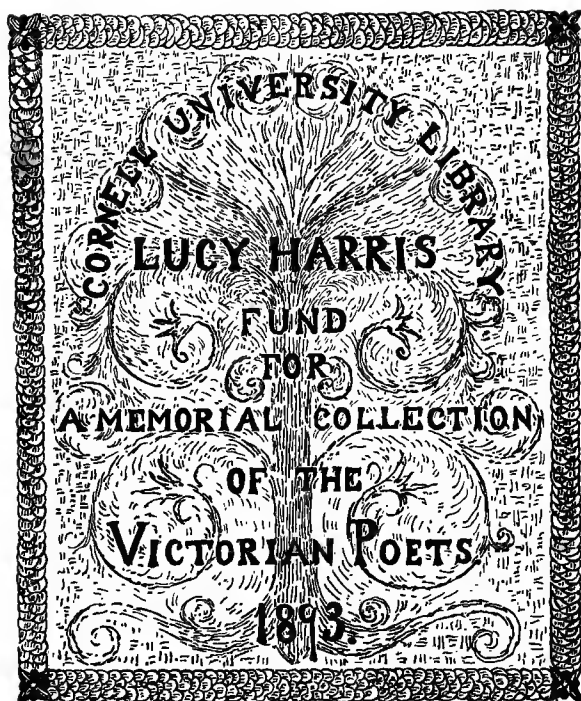


THE REVOLUTIONARY EPICK
AND OTHER POEMS

BENJAMIN DISRAELI



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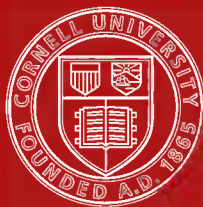
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**THE REVOLUTIONARY EPICK
AND OTHER POEMS**

THE
REVOLUTIONARY EPICK
And Other Poems

BY
BENJAMIN DISRAELI

(Earl of Beaconsfield)

—

Reprinted from the Original Edition, and Edited by
W. DAVENPORT ADAMS

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The Revolutionary Epick

THE WORK OF
DISRAELI THE YOUNGER
AUTHOR OF
"THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ROMANCE"

LONDON:
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET

MDCCCXXXIV

PREFACE.

It was on the plains of Troy that I first conceived the idea of this work. Wandering over that illustrious scene, surrounded by the tombs of heroes and by the confluence of poetic streams, my musing thoughts clustered round the memory of that immortal song, to which all creeds and countries alike respond, which has vanquished Chance, and defies Time. Deeming myself, perchance too rashly, in that excited hour, a Poet, I cursed the destiny that had placed me in an age that boasted of being anti-poetical. And while my Fancy thus struggled with my Reason, it flashed across my mind, like the lightning which was then playing over Ida, that in those great poems which rise, the pyramids of poetic art, amid the falling and the fading splendor of less creations, the Poet hath ever embodied the spirit of his Time. Thus, the most heroic incident of an heroic age produced in the *Iliad* an Heroic Epick; thus, the consolidation of the most superb of Empires, produced in the *Æneid* a Political Epick; the revival of Learning, and the birth of vernacular Genius, presented us in the *Divine Comedy* with a National Epick; and the Reformation and its consequences called from the rapt lyre of Milton a Religious Epick.

And the spirit of my Time, shall it alone be uncelebrated?
Standing upon Asia, and gazing upon Europe, with the

THE REVOLUTIONARY EPICK

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I.

THRONED on an orb of light, whose mighty form
Blazed like a planet in the purple air,
The awful Demogorgon sate; a cloud,
As mist conceals the cataract, a cloud
Softened the terrors of his shadowy mien.
On either side his throne, in vast array,
The Spirits of his host maintained their state;
Bright beings, beauteous as the rosy morn,
With amethystine wings and starry crowns;
Rank above rank in semicircled grace;
In front the chiefs, behind the inferior sprites,
Until within the dim and distant sky
Mingle their blending wings; while broad and bright,
Spanning this still and solemn company,
A gorgeous Iris spreads its glowing arch!

II.

And hark! within that arch, a sound arises,
A swelling sound, like voice of gathering winds,
When in his mountain hold the tyrant Storm
Wakes from some troubled dream, and wild and grim,
Panting for ruin, to a trembling world
Murmurs his rage; as to that ominous breath
The forest with its shuddering branches bends,
And in their leafy caves the crouching beasts
Cling to the earth in pallid ecstasy,
So did that high and radiant multitude
Vail their bright crowns, and droop their fluttering wings.
The sound increased in music and in might,
Until the Iris to its trembling base
Shook in the flaming air. Hark to the peal!
Almighty words the almighty silence break,
It is the voice of that almighty throne.

III.

"Two SPIRITS bend before us, two Desires
 Blend with the passions of a struggling race :
 A twilight vision and a faded dream
 Are Past and Future to the shadowy ken
 Of dark creation, and their present breath
 A shifting mystery ; but with us no Past,
 No Future : and what was, and is to be,
 And the wild passage of the rapid hour,
 Are as the colours of this visible arch,
 Blended and beautiful ! Before us kneel
 The Genii of the world : the hour hath come
 When their high pleadings in the cause of man
 Await our doom : rise dread antagonists ! "

IV.

Whereat two mighty Spirits swift upsprang,
 Erst couchant at the foot of that high throne,
 Huge, strange, and motionless, like those vast shapes
 The pilgrim marks on some Nilotic isle,
 Basking their trunk-like forms in tropic ray.
 And as these mighty Spirits thus upsprang,
 They flung their shadows o'er the blazing orb,
 Like columns from the sunny midland sea,
 Dusking the splendour of the blue serene ;
 What time the demon of Arabia's winds,
 Soaring with lurid wings o'er scorching plains,
 Bows the light crowns of Palestina's palms,
 And clouds the waters of the dark-blue isles.

V.

The visage of the first was like the Night,
 A troubled night of beautiful wild storm,
 When moon, and stars, and blaze of quivering flash,
 Mix with the moving tumult of the time ;
 And clad in armour was this haughty form,
 Of rarest adamant ; a mitred helm,
 Framed of a single beryl, bound his brow,

O'ershadowed by a plume that seemed a cloud
Pregnant with thunder ; on one gleaming arm
Like to a setting sun a shield he bore ;
A ruby orb, flashing with rosy flame :
And in the other arm he waved a lance,
Like the tall mast of some tempestuous ship,
Struck by the lightning, its resplendent head
Still quivering with the blue and arrowy light.

VI.

The visage of the last was like the Day,
A summer day all beautiful and still,
The holiday of heaven, serene and sweet ;
When the young Moon sports in the sunny sky,
Like some fair child a father loves to please,
And bids her in the morning garden roam,
And throw awhile aside her duteous task ;
Mild though indulged, obedient still though gay.
The radiant robes wherein this form was clad
A silver zone inclosed ; his graceful locks,
Bound by a modest fillet, gently flow
Over his bust, yet flowing, do not shade
The clear effulgence of his lofty brow ;
One graceful arm a silver shield defends,
And with his right he waved a dazzling blade.

VII.

They stood before each other in their pride,
The robed Spirit, and the mailed Shape,
Nor interchange of courtesy was lacked ;
Though when his form with ready reverence bowed
The silver-shielded sprite, the beryl helm
But slightly veiled its plume ; as some vast pine
That crowns an Alp, or Ida's Cretan mount,
Proud in primæval roots, scarce deigns to move
Its haughty summit to the passing breeze.
Now through the ranks of those celestial bands
A breathless tremor ran, when in the sky
Waving his mighty spear with solemn sweep,

The supernatural warrior seemed to speak,
 And like a trumpet on the battle morn,
 The voice of ages floated on the air.

VIII.

"RULER UNSEEN! an ocean of long years
 Hath cast its waves on Time's eternal shore,
 Since first thy harbinger of peace to man,
 I lighted on the globe thy mercy loves.
 That antique globe seemed then in its decay;
 Creeds, customs, statutes, changing like a dream,
 The dying dream of dim decrepitude,
 Feeble and nerveless, wild at once and weak.
 A change that had no order and no aim,
 The shifting of the sufferer in his cell,
 Who varies torture with his restlessness.
 And all was pithless, silent, vague, and dull,
 And Nature and Society both seemed
 Alike exhausted: like an ancient pair
 Upon the winter of whose latter days
 Pour thick the shrivelled leaves, that gusty Sorrow
 Drives from Misfortune's tree. A piteous scene!
 War brought no glory, Peace bore no delight;
 The hand forgot its craft; the eye its skill;
 All sense of beauty, and all sights of love,
 Drooped off and died; the temple of high thought
 Raised by the lofty souls that conquer Time,
 Each hour some falling column told its fate;
 The very soul of man seemed changed and struck,
 For even his crimes lacked vigour, though most vile;
 The craft of woman and the eunuch's spite:
 All honour, justice, love of father-land,
 And holy faith, and household chastity,
 And the high soul that will not breathe a slave,
 And all for which men strive, or live, or die,
 All withered from the face of the wan earth;
 While mid the ruins of her palaces,
 Discrowned Empire, with her toothless threats,
 Sat like a beldame on a church-yard tomb,
 At whom the urchins scoff.

IX.

“ Alone I stood
Upon the loftiest mountain of the earth,
And from the faded majesty of man,
Dull thrones, and witless theatres, and ports,
Rotting with shroudless ships, I turned my glance
To the dark world that man had not defiled,
Where the eternal Forest spread its form ;
Each branch an empire, shadowing mighty streams
And silent oceans. Thrice I wildly waved
Over this fresh and maiden womb of Time,
Quick with the struggles of a coming world,
This lance, the rival of its proudest pine,
And thrice I struck this shield, this ruby shield,
Red as that sun whose rays it yet defied.

X.

“ Anon ! a murmur through that wilderness
Runs brisk and busy, like the eager leaves
Responding blithely to the voice of Spring.
And lo ! the shadow of each hoary grove
Bursts with the swarming life of lusty man !
They come ! they come ! Their endless multitudes,
Nations, and tribes pour forth ; each ancient cavern
Vomits its valiant tribe ; each gloomy gorge
Its uncouth horde ; in leafy raiment clad,
Or savage skins ; some painted like a sword,
Blue as the skies with starry mimicry ;
And some with flowing locks, and some all shorn.
All breathing like the Morn, when first the breeze
Starts from its forest couch, and fresh and glad
From off the mountains call the waking plains
To renovated life. A vigorous race !
The children of the Earth before her fall.
See ! how they gaze upon the unknown Sun !
What wonder in their glistening visages !
And in the air, the unaccustomed air,
They wave their brawny arms, as if to try
Their inexperienced strength ! The forest shakes !

Down dash the mighty trunks, with rustling sweep
 Those ancient arbours fall, and in the air
 Fly the huge boughs. Yea! mid their struggling life
 The forest sinks, nor roots conate with Chaos
 Withstand their energy; of healthful man
 The God-like energy. Beneath their toil,
 Plains clothed with pastures taller than their kine,
 Expand their waving breast: beneath their rafts
 Their frightened streams the crowded rivers hide,
 Or yield them passage on their ice-bound wave,
 Nature's stern bridge. By heavens! a stalwart brood!
 And soon these wild, heroic families,
 Full of the vigour they alone could feel,
 The panting vigour of a nation's youth,
 Follow where'er their guiding rivers lead,
 In pastoral pomp; their daring consciences
 Prophetic of their glorious appanage;
 The brilliant regions of a sunnier world,
 Its glittering cities and its golden fields!

XI.

"The snowy summits of the dusky mountains
 That guard the cultured graces of the earth
 Are sullied by their tramp; the pathless crags
 Echo their wandering clamour; and wild birds
 Shriek at these wilder things, and shrieking fly.
 Emerging from the clouds, they gaze upon
 The expanding lustre of that teeming world,
 O'er whose bright dream the warriors oft had mused,
 By the cold rivers of their iron land.
 They gazed, they paused, some shouted, and some wept,
 And some fell down upon their aching knees,
 And praised their uncouth Gods; the women clung
 With fearful rapture to the sturdy necks,
 Whose courage they had rivalled, till the sight
 Of all their hopes recalled their womanhood,
 Or tossed their children in the clearer air,
 To taste the rising fragrance of the land.

XII.

"As when the winter winds propel the clouds
Upon the darkened heights the eagle loves,
Amid the crash of falling elements
The dried up torrents swell to sudden life;
And, robed in garments of their glittering spray,
The youthful cataracts leap with shouting glee,
Like high-born prodigals, in wanton pride,
Pouring their recent treasure to the plain:
So did these novel nations downward dash,
And the dark barriers of the startled world
Gleamed with their raging tide. With trembling haste,
The pale-eyed monarchs seized their idle swords,
And called their silken warriors to the field;
And all were mute and mazed, save muttering priests
Clinging to altars with a faithless fear.
In vain! in vain! The children of the wild
Tread down their feeble legions. Temple and tower,
All the long trophies of forgotten years,
Heroic column and triumphal arc,
Yield to the impulse of their forest birth:
They grasp their golden harvests; swift they seize
The oily tribute of their cherished groves;
They revel in their vineyards; yea! they dash,
Dash from its clustering form the blood of grape,
And press, with maddened glance, the unknown fruit.

XIII.

"Reclining on my pensive spear I mused,
And watched the tide of man; the fresh'ning flood
Subsiding, now some mountain glimpses yields
Of the new earth, and o'er the horizon dark
A twilight gleam of order faintly spreads.
'Whence shall arise,' I cried, 'the Sun of life
To bathe this earth in beauty? Whence the beam
To guide these beings in their duteous task,
And cheer them in their sorrow? Whence the law,
All shall obey, all love; the law profound

Gauging their nature's depth, the summons clear
 To which the caverns of their inmost heart
 Shall with an echo prompt and glad respond?'

XIV.

"Immediately the rushing sound of wings
 Passed through the sky; invisible indeed
 Their wavy flight: but o'er the mountain peak,
 Like an aërial crown, a chorus floats,
 Angelic chorus, as alone descends
 On favoured ears, and thus declared its voice:
 The sweet and thrilling voice of Seraphim.

XV.

"'A SOLEMN TEMPLE is the soul of man,
 And all the saintly structures of his race
 Are but its type: the mighty pyramid,
 The snowy fane, the radiant shrine of gold,
 The flowing music and the shadowy lustre,
 That hover round his altars; pomp of priests
 In flashing robes, and images divine,
 Ivory and gems, or tinted like the cloud
 Of gorgeous Eve; phantoms of godlike grace,
 Piercing the wreathing incense with their gaze
 Seraphic; emblems of the heaven-born fancies,
 That round that holier altar, his high heart,
 Cluster with shrouding wings and trembling prayer,
 Are these: a thousand creeds, a thousand forms
 Of multiplied belief, his faith attest,
 And prove his restless passion to ADORE.
 The dædal faith of the old world had died
 An euthanasia of divine despair!
 And all the graceful forms, that once had deigned
 To mingle with mankind, and kindly breathe
 Immortal accents to adoring ears,
 Waved their bright pinions in the darkened air,
 And sorrowing, fled. No more the radiant God,
 Hailed by expecting bands of choral youth,
 Guided each rosy morn his golden car,

Careering through the laughing realms of space ;
 No more the Genius of the river poured
 His deep blue waters from the sculptured urn ;
 And oh ! no more the sweet and solemn grove,
 Gleamed with the glittering form of glancing nymph !

XVI.

“ ‘ Then on the doubting Earth bright Truth descended,
 Like some fair dove upon a stormy day,
 Whose herald is the sunbeam ; many a gleam
 Gilding the fissures of the gloomy sky,
 Foretold the golden hour her silver wing
 Should sail within the sweet and spotless air :
 But man who loves the eagle, though his beak
 Ravish his hearth ; insensate, who adores
 The vulture feeding on his tortured breast ;
 No beauty found in those resplendent pinions,
 That neck of azure light, those sunny eyes of peace !
 And all the warbling of the heavenly stranger,
 Though when the rising walls obeyed the lyre
 That echoed in the Theban waste, a strain
 Sweeter ne’er rested on the trembling breast
 Of earth responsive, on his callous ear
 Fell with harsh sound. Alas ! alas ! the anguish,
 The woe, the agony, the consternation,
 The baffled purposes and broken hopes,
 When that divine domestic history,
 Appealed in vain ! In vain, with skill divine,
 A God upon the balanced plumes of Love
 Would poise a social globe ; in vain the likeness,
 Even of his humblest child assumes, and shares
 The sweet infirmities of life in vain.
 Yes ! weeps o’er human graves, and leans on human hearts !

XVII.

“ ‘ And from this innocent cradle of all Truth,
 Hath sprung a base and clamourous progeny,
 The airy children of distempered brain !
 Dogmas undisciplined, and frenzied creeds,

Holding their riot in a frightened world.
 And doctrines changing like a waning moon
 That leaves a starless night. Here Truth is found,
 And voted false to-morrow, like a gem
 That proves a pebble; there a maniac voice
 Describes the invisible, the unknown defines.
 Jargonic strife and logomachic rage!
 Man fights for syllables and worships words
 While priestly courts, and warlike sanhedrims,
 Hail each wild comet the appointed star
 That leads them to the promised Deity.
 Learn then in vain would earthly wisdom solve
 Celestial will; vain as that laggard's task,
 Who waits the current of a fading stream.
 The course a miracle alone can change.
 All is not darkness where the human eye
 Opaquely wanders: Truth indeed is veiled,
 But with a Schekinah of DAZZLING LIGHT.'

XVIII.

" Ceased the great song: and as I wistful stood,
 As men will stand when something bright has past,
 Beauteous or strange, still lingering with the hope
 It may return; behold two lovely youths
 My gaze attract; attracting, me address.
 Most beauteous boys, for on their tender cheek
 Still bloomed the down, indeed most beautiful!
 For not two equal stars in the same sky
 Serenely shining; not fraternal flowers
 From the same graceful stem their fragrant life
 Expanding; nor upon a sunny branch
 Two sparkling birds their gushing lyrics trilling,
 And making all the woods a roundelay;
 No! not two antelopes in sportive love
 Exulting in their free-born wilderness,
 Some green Oasis of their desert world,
 Some spot of palmy springs—more beautiful,
 More bright, more sweet, more fancifully fair,
 Than these same minions of this mountain land!

Alike, yet different, for, although their forms
 And comely features were the same as shades
 Seen in still waters to the o'ergazing shapes,
 And spoke fraternity of nearest tie ;
 More solemn was the visage of the first,
 And more assured his mien ; for round his neck
 Twined was his fairer brother's arm, who cast
 His sight upon the earth, though oft uplooking
 And stealing glances which he seemed to fear.
 Upon the forehead of the duskier imp,
 Who with his lofty brow and glowing eye,
 Shone bright and solemn as an Asian night,
 Glimmered a ruby cross ; a ruby crown
 Studded his brother's front, if through those veins
 Fraternal ichor ran.

XIX.

“ ‘ Celestial knight,’

In dulcet tones the darker child exclaimed,
 ‘ Two pages in thy perilous embrace
 We seek to be, my brother and myself.’
 And who are ye ? I answered, with a smile
 Of fondness, more than wonder, who are ye,
 That in this high and icy wilderness,
 Shunned even by the eagle, take your course
 Serene and beautiful ? ‘ Spirits are we,’
 Replied the youth, ‘ though clad in human form,
 And in our essence even akin to thee,
 Although the starry choristers that chant
 Eternal praises round the eternal throne,
 Few emanations from the form divine
 More reverence than the mighty sprite we see,
 In heaven, called MAGROS. Yes ! akin to thee,
 Although inferior in our blood divine ;
 They call me FAITH ; my brother, FEALTY hight.’

XX.

“ Oft have I heard of ye, ye lovely imps,
 And full of virtue are your holy names !

Joyful am I, my perilous emprise
 Summons such fellowship. The troubled earth
 Awaits our coming. At these words, unfurling
 My mighty wings, that on the glacier's glare
 Flung a quick shade, to each enormous plume
 A spirit clung, like drop of radiant dew
 Upon the tawny lion's sweeping mane,
 Or small white cloud upon a sultry sky,
 The fervid offspring of the thunder's breath.
 We rose: then soaring in the difficult air,
 Thy envoy, Magros, ere the dying sun
 Poured his last legacy of golden light,
 With FAITH and FEALTY on Earth descended.

XXI.

"It seemed a place of tombs and ruin vast,
 Majestic in its awful misery:
 Grey walls and mouldering arches, columns lone,
 High in the purple air; or massy peak
 Of some eternal pyramid; huge fanes
 That seemed the shattered fragments of some mount,
 The flame had split and scorched; and mighty wrecks,
 That once were palaces and golden roofs,
 And from whose dank and tangled side now sprung
 The cypress and the pine. And in this place,
 Twilight perpetual was, save some few stars,
 That shed their red and flickering rays around,
 And gilt the ruin with a gloomy glare.
 Nor human life was marked, though in the groves
 And ghastly branches of the blasted trees,
 Brooded black shapes; while, ever and anon,
 The shadow of a dragon gleamed below,
 Or restless serpent round some column coiled.

XXII.

"And in the heart of this strange solitude
 Arose a spreading mass, which first we deemed
 Crumbling Acropolis, or citadel;
 But nearer viewing, Nature not but Art

Might claim its parentage ; for gold was there,
 And worked, it seemed, by rare artificers,
 Jewels of price, and choicest sculpturing.
 It seemed a glorious thing, yet what, we knew not ;
 It was so huge, so shadowy, and so worn !
 And seated in its front, upon the earth,
 There was a form, some granite god we deemed,
 Or king of balmy Nile, colossal shapes,
 Such as Syene's rosy quarries yield
 To Memphian art ; Horus, Osiris, called,
 Or Amenoph, who on the Theban plain
 With magic melody the sun salutes ;
 Or he, far mightier, to whose conquering car
 Monarchs were yoked, Rameses : by the Greeks
 Sesostris styled. And yet no sculptor's art
 Moulded this shape, for form it seemed of flesh,
 Yet motionless ; its dim unlustrous orbs
 Gazing in stilly vacancy, its cheek
 Grey as its hairs, which thin as they might seem,
 No breath disturbed ; a solemn countenance
 Not sorrowful, though full of woe sublime,
 As if despair were now a distant dream
 Too dim for memory. By its gloomy side,
 A shivered sceptre lie, and trampled crown ;
 And on its robes the dust of ages rested,
 Crusting the Tyrian purple like a stream
 Of frozen lava.

XXIII.

" And although my sight
 Hath gazed full often on this orb divine,
 And long my form hath mingled with the proudest
 That wave their pinions in these radiant ranks,
 I stood in awe before this silent shape,
 And my immortal pages to my side
 Clung with a trembling clutch. And as I watched
 With breathless scrutiny that reverend face,
 Behold a tear, a solitary tear,
 Broke from those ancient eye-balls ; down it rolled,

Adown that wan majestic visage rolled,
 And trickled o'er that grey and streaming beard—
 And then the weeper sighed. Not loud that sigh,
 Yet strangely thrilling, and unearthly echoes
 That sigh repeat. Upon each blasted branch
 The brooding visions flapped their mystic wings,
 And in their dens obscene the dragons lashed
 Their flaming tails, and every serpent hissed.

XXIV.

“And who art thou, that in this wilderness
 Seem Desolation's monarch, though discrown'd?
 I said, and on the venerable form
 Gently my lance I dropped; whereat he turned,
 Yet spoke not, though he gazed with a strange glance,
 As if contempt had changed to wonderment
 When he beheld his guests. Yes! who art thou?
 In courteous tones I urged. He looked, and said,
 ‘I am the Spirit of an Ancient Throne,
 And mourn Imperial days that ne'er can be
 Forgotten or recalled.’ And then he turned
 And gazed upon his ruins!

“Know'st thou not
 Power comes from God, I cried, all earthly rule
 Is but the shadow of His light above.
 When first the world he formed, as to a ship
 The framer joins a rudder, thus on earth
 Power was the spring, the architect divine
 Implanted for its guidance; 'tis a force
 Man cannot form, though when, with eager hand,
 He grasps the sceptre from some fading brother,
 He deems himself creator, when indeed,
 He but inherits; as in warlike games
 Bold dancers seize the torch another yields;
 The torch they seize, but not the flame create.
 And who seized thine? Upon the earth it lies:
 If thou hast lost, another has not won:
 Thy torch has dropped, thou hast not yielded it;
 And at thy ancient feet now smould'ring lies.

Then up! forget thy slips, that none have marked,
And wave thy olden sceptre!

“ His dim head
More quickly turning, thus the form replied;
‘ And who art thou, that thus upon the night
Of my dark fortunes flash with lightning words,
Stirring a tempest in my long spent soul?
The stalwart Gaul that struck my curule state,
And plucked my beard in the Forum’s court,
Were but thy henchman. Alaric himself,
The last wild pageant of my shadowy foes,
Would sink beneath the flashing of thy mien.
I know thee not; unless indeed thou art
The Memory of Mars, as I am but
The Dream of his adorer?’

XXV.

“ I am one,
The chosen envoy of that mighty soul
From whom all gods descend, or Jove, or Mars;
For what are they but forms fantastical,
Wherewith men clothe the varied attributes
Of dread Omnipotence? Cheer up, great ghost!
Imperial phantom rise! Obedient
To my quick glance, my pages then advanced;
First, Faith, with solemn mien, but most assured,
Him Fealty followed with a trembling step,
And raised the great Forlorn. Myself I took,
In my wide grasp, that long forgotten throne,
Like some vast Titan when he clasped a rock
To scale the skies. High in the startled air,
I raised the mass sublime; then to the earth
I dashed it on its base. Shrieked the wild birds,
A death groan from their caves the dragons sighed,
And from their columns lifeless fell the snakes.
Unmarked by me; for when the fell Simoom
Breathes o’er Arabia’s waste, and in the sky,
Lurid and wild, the sandy pillars rise,
And the swift soil in scorching eddies whirls

O'er crouching camels, and o'er rearing steeds,
 And prostrate riders, with its fatal sweep,
 Like some demoniac pageant passing; never
 Was such a murky tumult!

XXVI.

“ Yet subsides
 That mighty storm; and oh! what marvel now
 Breaks on my startled vision! Lo! no more
 The eternal Twilight with its blood-red eyes,
 As if the tears of centuries had tinged
 Those fevered orbs, upon that fatal scene
 Gazes no more: but there, serene and sweet,
 Expands a lucid vault of azure light,
 Bright with the golden promise of the Sun.
 All hideous forms had vanished: from the bills
 Of sparkling birds a matin chant arose
 Fresh as the dew that quivered on their plumes.
 And mid the wilderness of shrubs and flowers
 That covered the new earth, and made the air
 Balmy with perfume, in her ferny form
 Rustled the hare, and like a glittering gem
 Gleamed the green lizard. Yet indeed still rose
 Those wrecks sublime of empire: Ruin there
 Still reigned with hoary rule; but o'er her wan
 And bony form, an ivy mantle Grace
 Had gently thrown; and her denuded scalp
 Old Time had circled with a gorgeous tiar
 Of starry parasites!

XXVII.

“ Upon his throne
 I raised the ancient Spirit, at his feet
 The pages rest; and as within his hand
 I thrust his fallen sceptre, with a blast,
 As of a thousand trumpets, sprang the Sun
 From out the far horizon; the warm rays
 Falling upon that high and reverend head,
 The twilight of decay so long had cooled.

Now mark ! with swelling force the orb of day
Opens its mighty cirque, and from its heart
An eagle springs : high o'er the throne it soars,
Circling with airy whirls its ancient chief ;
And bearing in its beak a triple crown.
Thrice did it whirl, and then that crown it dropped.
With clashing clank upon my spear's bright head
The prize I caught, and with triumphant heart
Upon that grey eternal brow I placed
That Triple Crown—the symbol of his power
Over the future lands of joy and woe,
And that dim isthmus of a middle realm
Bright Heaven, black Hell, and glimmering Purgatory !

XXVIII.

“ Anon ! upon my ear there rose a sound
Distinct yet delicate, a sound most soft,
A tone melodious as the airy shell
The child discovers on the lonely shore
And presses to his agitated ear :
Or hum of early bees on vagrant wing,
In some new entered garden wandering wild,
Nor knowing where to cull the virgin sweets.
Louder and louder now that sound became
Like falls of water from some unseen hill,
In valleys wandering heard ; or distant roar
Of the resounding sea.—Now louder still
Upon the wind it floats ! It is ! It is !
The hum of nations and the tramp of hosts !
Hah ! on the misty mountain tops I catch
Their glittering standards wrestling with the clouds,
And lo ! each black defile and dark ravine
Pours forth its pomp.—The nations of the Earth
Come forth to kneel round our imperial altar !
O ! Man the victim and the votary
Of ever torturing Doubt, and restless Wit !
Now close accounts with these sharp creditors ;
Yea ! now forget thy verbal fantasies,
Echoing the oracles of our high speech.

Anoint thy visage with the sacred dust
 This foot celestial consecrates : behold
 With eager homage, and with passionate awe
 This mystical Omnipotence who breathes
 Unsoldiered edicts to a martial world :
 Before whose ban advancing armies quail—
 This Sovereign of Sovereigns whose right arm
 With favoured grace, an Emperor may support,
 The silken bridle of whose sacred mule
 A King alone may guide ; and mightier far,
 Before whose preternatural panoply
 The Ineffable himself, the unbreathed name,
 Spirit supreme, that o'er the darkling deep
 Moved with creating wings, what time the Light
 Sprung like an arrow through the eternal gloom,
 Deigns to advance in visible majesty—
 The mystic idol of bewildered sense !
 Lo ! as the universal Pontiff waves
 His hand divine, and with celestial love
 Serenely smiles, as from a gloomy tree,
 Cypress severe, or melancholy yew,
 Sally bright birds, or from a gloomier night
 Stars brighter issue ; thus on staggering man,
 Came Truth and Order with their welcome ray,
 Prophetic of the warmer joys of dawn !
 All sympathising Rome ! a favoured child
 Was Man when gazing on thy heavenly smile,
 With gushing heart and eye of glistening dew,
 A common parentage he fondly hailed !
 Thy robe paternal grasping in his fears,
 And in his sorrow clinging to the breast
 That ever pardoned : parent, judge, and friend !
 Alike indulgent, with thy sacred rule,
 Returning Spring, with all its suavity,
 Mellowed the wintry heart of rugged man.
 Arts bloomed, and Learning budded ; softening Faith
 Burst like a balmy May-day with its sweets,
 And made all gentle as its odorous breeze,
 While on contending sceptres meekly dropped
 The Peace-compelling Crosier !

XXIX.

“ On his throne,
A throne that touched the skies, and deep infix'd
Its roots stupendous in the prostrate earth,
The godlike Pontiff sate : a kneeling world
Crouch at its base : various their form, their garb,
Their language various ; like alone in faith !
The children of the South with burning zeal,
Ecstatic, wild ; their flashing eyes the test
That tells their stormy soul ! Less near, behold
The deep devotion of the Northman's heart,
Serenely gazing with a steadfast glance,
Stern as his clime, and rigid as his soil.
Hark ! to the murmur of their rising prayer,
Ascending like the universal dew,
The vesper beads that nunlike Nature tells.
The mountains of the world send forth their voices ;
That chorus is the burthen of the streams ;
The simultaneous cities and the woods
Echo that song sublime ; and o'er the Sea
The isles transmit the tribute of their praise.
But silent now, for in the hushed serene
Riseth that arm supreme, and from his vest
A crystal vase, in likeness of a dove,
Forth draws that mighty Presbyter ; anon
A crowd of crowned beings round his throne
Gather and kneel : great marvel now behold !
Upon the consecrated Kings of Earth,
That vase he pours : hushed is the step of Time,
A deed is done that takes his breath away :
A regal baptism of mighty faith !
For as each monarch from that mighty throne
Withdraws, a nation to his purple robe
With rapture cling ! To heavenly delegates
A willing fealty what soul denies ?
Thus all its harsher attributes were lost
To stern Authority ; Obedience now
Worship became ; thus LOYALTY was born,
A joyous creed that made a Heaven of Earth.

XXX.

“ Whoso may gaze upon the Firmament,
Shall view the Sun upon his golden throne;
Or if, indeed, he seek the softer hour,
When on his radiant couch that royal form,
Wearied with empire, throws its lustrous limbs,
And purple Night her solemn drapery
Draws round that beamy brow; the silver Moon,
Entrusted Regent of the vacant throne,
With gentle sway his awful sceptre waves;
And far and near a starry nation shines,
Different in form, and force, and hue and state;
Some blazing like the gems, that beauty loves
Wherewith to deck herself more passing fair;
A diamond here, and there the rosy flash
Of gleaming ruby, or the quivering ray
Bright as a serpent's eye the emerald shoots;
The shadowy lustre of the modest pearl,
And opal's clouded Iris; here again
Most lavish heaps of coin, the maddening ore
For which men fight and women love, they say,
All fascinating gold! There lone and bright,
In its deep solitude, some single star
Glow's like a holy Eremite entranced
With flashing visions of a Paradise;
And here a trail of splendour like a plume;
Clustering like fruit are these, or fairer flowers;
While o'er this azure and expansive sheen,
A bright suffusion, like a glittering veil
O'er shrinking beauty, glows, or, it may be,
The trembling curtain of some dazzling shrine
Breathing with oracles! All various these!
Yet all is harmony, and order hushed;
While round the sovereign throne their blazing cars
The mighty Planets guide, and shine the spheres,
Whose being regulates this radiant realm:
Whoso within the mighty woods may lie,
What time refulgent June her votary calls
Upon the fragrant turf his form to fling,

And build bright castles in a summer sky,
 Shall view the mien of some majestic oak,
 Spreading its noble branches in the air,
 Upon the bosom of the heated earth
 Deep shadows casting. Mark! its awful trunk;
 Column superb! A navy in its core!
 Firm in the roots of ages, see it shoot
 Its valiant members from its sapful heart:
 From these broad boughs dependent branches spring,
 And gentler shoots from them, till in the end
 Some slender spray, whereon a little bird
 May sing in innocence. While everywhere,
 Or thick as bowers where lovers choose to sigh,
 Or glancing in the Sun's transparent gleam,
 And quivering with the breeze that scarcely breathes,
 So thin, so delicate; the lively leaves
 Rejoice in their existence! Beautiful!
 The starry heavens and the leafy woods!
 And oh! as round a regal Sun may roll
 Triumphant Planets, as from parent trunk
 Swell the wide branches, and the vigorous boughs,
 Thus did a bright and strong Nobility
 Gather around the glory of a Throne!

XXXI.

"The Earth is but the shadow of the Skies,
 And Man is but the emblem of the Earth:
 Alike their natures, single and supreme
 POWER reigns alike in each. Upon this orb
 It sits enthroned in veiled majesty,
 Unseen, unlimited! In Nature's realm
 Rules the resistless Sun with piercing ray,
 And Kings are Gods on earth, and blazing lights
 To guide and bless their race. Supremacy,
 Of order and of all celestial gifts,
 That to our starry mansions raise the Earth,
 A garden of delight for demi-gods,
 Fecundant parent! Thus in Kings alone,
 And in their delegates, the noble streams

These royal sources feed, should Power subsist.
 For chosen few its noble exercise;
 Although its sovereign care the multitude
 May rightly claim and challenge for their own.
 For know ye not, that they whose urgent wants
 Press with sharp spur upon their jaded side,
 But little reck save of the appointed goal,
 And spare no glance to passing travellers.
 The urgent Present is the toilsome world
 In which the labourer lives: himself his all.
 These sweaty Esaus of a struggling race,
 Would sell their birthright for a savoury bowl:
 For them Posterity is but a dream,
 And swift To-morrow but a truant hind,
 That lags upon a graceless errandry.
 All provident is Power; and therefore since
 The race who struggle for their daily life
 Think only of the life for which they strive,
 Such thoughtless labourers as would surely tend
 The leaves and not the fruit, shall they be let
 To lord it in the vineyard of our joys?
 Deep in the strata of the human heart,
 The seeds of Aristocracy are sown:
 A vigorous plant, and soon a nation's pride,
 That ardent atmosphere, its lusty buds
 Calls forth to taste the promise of their Spring;
 And when the glowing Summer of their fortunes
 Leads on its dazzling pageant, mark ye well
 To lustrous bloom those lusty buds expand,
 And fill the air with splendour and perfume!

XXXII.

"He who is bred within an honoured place,
 And from his mother womb unto his grave
 Nought low, nought sordid, views; but early taught
 By all the glories of his ancestors,
 Them to remember, doth himself respect:
 Around whose infant image, all men's thoughts
 Cluster, like bees, to gather sweetest hopes;

And, as he mixes with the multitude,
Feels like a trophy in the market-place,
The public property and public pride;
Who from his elevated station views,
As from some noble mount, or lofty tower,
The wide spread region of Society,
With all its changing climes and varying soils,
Of fruitfulness and waste, its interchange,
Not clouded by the vapour or the vale,
That bounds a vulgar vision; but sublime
Throws o'er the wond'rous view his ken serene,
And ponders how to make the land more fair;
Who gives the leisure Law hath given to him
To make that Law more loved; who chases Wisdom
Within her treasured covers; keen his sport
O'er what he finds deep musing; or to talk
With scholar ripe, and brainful traveller,
May love; or in his dull and drooping hour
The artist cheer, and whisper tidings sweet
Of the all-piercing beam of rising Taste,
That on his dark, neglectful night shall fall,
And gild his shrouded genius—Oh! believe me.
This man, thus honoured, set apart, refined,
Serene and courteous, learned, thoughtful, brave,
As full of charity as noble pomp,
This pledge that in the tempests of the world,
The stream of culture shall not backward ebb,
This is the Noble that mankind demands,
And this the Man a nation loves to trust.

XXXIII.

“And such are those, my soul-inspiring creed
Hath led to godlike deeds, the lofty hearts
That framed the structure that my plan devised,
Serene and noble, as themselves sublime;
The goodly order of this cultured world!
Ye Stars! I call ye forth to witness, Ye!
Bright ministers that on the shadowy breast
Of passionate Earth, watchful, and hushed, and still,

Gaze like pure sisters on the sleeping wrath
 Of some dark brother ; thou, serenest Moon !
 In purest æther sailing, as the foam
 Flung on the purple wave, as white and free ;
 Thou glittering tear in Night's cerulean eye !
 Or pearl in azure cave, whose lustrous beam
 The breathless grasp of daring diver plucks,
 And then uprising from the stifling wave,
 Before some princess throws the gorgeous gem ;
 Queen of the midnight sky ! And thou great Light,
 The conqueror of day, whose golden plume
 Heroic dances in the morning air,
 Prophetic of the crimson victory,
 Thy twilight tent shall crown ! Ye ambient Winds
 That course about the quarters of the globe,
 And visit all their fortunes, ye have seen.
 Ye great and lesser lights, ye envoys swift,
 Ye too have witnessed, the eternal Earth,
 And all its loveliness. Oh ! have I not,—
 Ye mighty witnesses attest my truth !—
 Have I not clothed its golden breast with grain,
 And made each land a garden of green trees,
 And winged the waters like a beauteous sprite,
 The deep blue Ocean with its snowy plumes,
 Wafting the tribute of his subject climes
 Unto their pampered lord : Europa's gift
 Of dædal arts ; and Afric's sultry spoil,
 Rare tusks, and precious dust, and wavy pomp
 Of tropic plumage ; and the teeming dower
 Of dusky Asia, man's exhaustless bride ;
 And the twin regions of the new-born World,
 That rose from out the wilderness of waves,
 Like those heroic stars the sailor loves ;
 And the rich cluster of the golden isles,
 The sweet Canaries and the soft Azores ?
 Have not I raised fair cities like the clouds,
 Bathed in the dying sun's creative blaze,
 The passing pageant of triumphant Eve ;
 Palace and citadel, popular theatre,
 Columnar trophy, gates of victory,

Grey aqueducts the deep green hills across,
 And the broad rushing of the arched stream,
 And causeways echoing with a nation's throng?
 And from the deep religion of each land,
 Hath not my inspiration summoned forth
 Unrivalled temples; aisles of solemn shade,
 And nave transcendant with prismatic light,
 And clustered pillars with their leafy crowns,
 Bearing on high the deep and branched roof,
 Within whose chequered bowers music lives;
 And sparkling shrine, and chauntry delicate;
 And pageantry of airy pinnacles;
 And steeples blending with the kindred skies—
 What temple of old Rome—that throne triumphant
 Whereon the Capitolian godhead waved
 His conquering sceptre; or that lurid shrine
 In whose dim groves with swift and streaming swords,
 Clashing in dizzy dance their brazen shields,
 The Salian priests invoked the bloody shade
 They called a deity; or that vast dome
 Of pantheistic faith, sublimely soaring,
 Like its wide creed, within the liberal air:
 Or say what lightsome fane of airy Greece,
 Delicate Athens with her sparkling crest
 Of snowy columns on a sunny crag;
 Or halls of columned Pharaohs with their gates
 As high and brilliant as the rosy ports
 Of opening Morn; and obeliscal pomp
 And pride colossal: streets of solemn Sphinxes,
 In still and supernatural beauty ranged,
 Can rival these divinest sanctuaries?

XXXIV.

“Have not I sent forth Poets to the world
 With voices like the wind that bringeth sweets
 To Earth enamoured with the perfumed sound,
 The Southern breeze, by renovated man
 Aye loved; of every creed and clime the priests
 Are holy poets, whatsoe'er their shrine,

Nation or state, or mood, or quality,
 The ministers all reverence; sweet alike
 The charm of verse creative, or in halls
 With cedar roofed, or where the humble thatch
 Secures the cottar from the tempest's wrath
 Raging on all alike. A spell is song,
 And Poetry indeed Art magical,
 That from the skies, or from the mystic womb
 Of secret earth, or from the unplumbed deep
 Summons obedient shapes; or wild, or fair;
 And in the brooding passions of the heart,
 Finds element wherewith to fill a world
 With breathing conduct. Yes! a spell is Song!
 Whether the laurel-crowned votary
 Chant the high fortunes of some rising race,
 Or fall of ancient line and outraged Gods,
 And ebb and flow of Freedom's sacred fate,
 And solemn fortunes: or in vivid flash
 Of mimic life, the secrets of the soul
 Subtle reveal, and touch the gasping hearts
 Of thrilling theatres; or in the depth
 Of some sublime, inspired solitude
 Pour forth his passion o'er his lonely lyre,
 And save a country, or a woman charm!

XXXV.

"PAINTER, come forth! Thou art the Poet's brother,
 Thou fellow huntsman in the fatal quest,
 Whose sport is Beauty. Oft your bitter dooming,
 When on your raptured sight some radiant nymph
 Or fair Divinity would seem to rise,
 Like baffled hounds thrown off an eager scent,
 Your fancies fail, and on their rash creator,
 Who hath so long cheered on their ardent course,
 They turn, and on his dark and tortured heart
 Feed with revengeful fang. A bitter fate
 Is his who broods o'er Beauty. Yet in vain,
 Unto the common scenes and moods of life
 Man turns and would be worldly. In his heart

Deeply implanted is the thirst divine
That pants for heavenly fountains—waters pure,
And bland, and bright, that fill the swelling soul
With thoughts sublime. The great IDEAL tints
The breathing tablet; this ennobling lust
Inspires the poet's voice, and from their base
Hath moved trembling statues, and their rapt
And mazed creators turned to passionate lovers!
And I, who recognized in glorious man
A reverential being, born to bow
Before the grand and lovely; I, who formed
As on a rock of adamant, secure
And precious, on this all-inspiring truth,
His creeds, his laws, his customs, formed a soul
To whose immortal sympathy in vain
The painter and the sculptor ne'er appeal.
And what could Hellas in her pride of Art,
Though the bright memory of her glory glows
Like an eternal sunset, call to life
Of more surpassing beauty than the forms
That fill the feudal tablets with their breath?
Seraphic saints, the dying ecstasy
And gushing radiance of whose deep blue eye
Reflects the approaching light of Paradise;
Martyrs whose symmetry makes Martyrdom
The fitting fate of such celestial shapes;
And the boy-God upon the all-favoured breast,
Slumbering with rosy dreams of perfect love,
While the transcendent mother with a glance,
Sweet, yet most solemn; calm, yet most profound;
Seems conscious of a doom too high for speech!

XXXVI.

"Ye mighty Witnesses, once more I summon
The tribute of your test! Say, who hath read
The secrets of your dwellings; who revealed
Your mystic courses? Hath he not—this man,
His genius prompted by my skill profound,
This atom of a moment hath he not

Measured dread Space, and given laws to Time?
 Ye Stars! in vain ye dazzle; all your beams
 Cloud not his piercing eye, though Night herself
 Enhance your lustre with her sable robe.
 Bright Moon! thou art his slave; a silver link
 Enchains thee to his waters; then toil on
 And make the waves obedient to his will.
 And thou, fierce Sun! in spite of all thy pride,
 The moment comes when even thy flaming brow
 Grows dead and pale before an enemy:
 Man knows thy doom, and knowing, does not fear.
 But when the dim and quivering hour arrives,
 And shuddering Nature to her centre shrinks,
 And thrills in all her pulses; Man alone,
 With front erect, the fray sublime observes,
 And gathers wisdom from thy baffled power.
 Nor triumph, haughty Winds! although your rage
 May level palaces, and tear the roots
 Of mighty woods; the children of my sway,
 They fear ye not, but in your arrogant teeth
 Will steer their course sublime; and for the rest,
 Man has his thunder—Gods can have no more!

XXXVII.

“And guided from its course by this wise hand,
 The Genius of the world hath poured its stream,
 In sweet and fertile beauty; from its birth
 Of green and silent fountains, hath it coursed,
 In the full majesty of tranquil tide,
 Making each wilderness a Paradise.
 If for a moment let by some wild rock,
 The dazzling cataract hath only proved
 The river's beauty, and the torrent's power,
 And made the noble Stream more clear and strong.
 Majestic Nations and heroic Men
 Prove the high influence of my glorious rule.
 Wise Laws, and genial Customs, and sweet Modes,
 That are the echo of a Nation's fondness,
 Brooding o'er some archaic age of love;

And Prejudice, at which fools scoff, unknowing
The precious fruit that husky rind enfolds ;
And old Prescription, with his tranquil smile,
The twin-born brother of Security ;
And Rights, that are the cheap rewards of worth ;
And Privilege, that makes each honoured arm
The champion of the Future ; all have sprung
From out the nature of the race they swayed ;
Their wants, their wishes, even their tastes foreseen,
And cultured into kind and beauteous use !

XXXVIII.

“ And SHE the light, the blessing of all life
Without whose sigh of love and smile of fondness,
Life is indeed but Death : WOMAN supreme !
That erst a silken slave in tyrant's hall
Moved with permissive step, at best a toy
Wherewith to wile away some useless hour,
And then the glittering bauble fling aside
With cold disdain, and muse of higher deeds—
Have not I placed her in a glowing shrine,
And made all hearts her trembling worshippers ?
A Goddess ! but a Goddess who descends
To make her human mate immortal with her love !
Oh ! fair in that bright hour, when Fortune smiles,
And the fond world is kind, and all is gay ;
And she the gayest, fondest of the throng ;
Playful and wild, voluptuous, delicate !
In the world's sunny garden of all joyance
A dazzling butterfly, an airy fawn !
A thing to be indulged, and lightly chased ;
Caught, but not captured ; ransomed with a kiss !
Her word, her glance, a law ; and her caprice
Reason complete ; but fairer, fairer still,
When the dark clouds spread o'er our shining life,
In sickness, and in sorrow, and in toil.
When by the suffering couch she sweetly tends,
With step that yields no sound, and eye that claims no sleep ;
Deeming devotion duty. Beauteous being !

Who shares our grief, and, sharing, soothes the pang :
 For then man feels, mid all his misery,
 Bliss still remains with such a ministrant ;
 And Labour, with no guerdon but her love,
 Is not inglorious : but in that fell hour,—
 Too oft the dooming of the child of song,
 And those quick spirits, whose creative brain
 Raise up the Dæmon they cannot control,
 In that fell hour of agony and hate,
 When men are wolves, and the wild earth a waste,
 And our names Execration, and our forms
 The scath of blinded zealots, then most fair!
 Most beautiful! For when all desert us,
 Art thou most faithful, and calumnious tongues
 But make thine own sweet lips more firm and fond!

XXXIX.

" Behold her on the throne my rival yields
 Her airy grace, chivalric Lyridon!
 Lo! from the halo of the misty earth,
 A vision rises in the plains of Space:
 The spectre of a nation, wild and red
 With parricidal gore; and high they wave
 Their flaming torches with a maniac glare,
 In ruin revelling. Their fertile land,
 Broad fields, and sunny vineyards, orchards gay
 With autumn's rosy harvest, Havock now
 With panting lungs and vision like the ray
 Of Sun eclipsed, over its blooming breast
 Hunts with her hell-hounds; ever and anon
 By the hot marge of some tumultuous stream,
 With shade of flaming town or antique house
 All red and glimmering, their infernal thirst
 Slaking; the water with their forked tongues
 Lapping, and lips besmeared with bloody foam;
 And all the charities of life are vanished,
 And all the bonds of sweet existence broken.
 Sons stab their sires; hurrying fathers bear
 To merciless tribunals whispers dire

To their own offspring ; in blaspheming streets
The priest is slaughtered ; Age no reverence finds,
And Youth no mercy ; but the wrinkled brow,
The blooming cheek, the wintry lock of life,
And the fair vision of the spring-like face,
That makes us ponder o'er the summer's doom,
Alike appeal is vain ! On all alike
Tramples the hoof of Anarchy, that steed
That hath no rider. Everywhere resounds
Cry of despair, and multitudinous wail.
And in the crowning city of the land
An altar or a scaffold—which is it,
That haunts our vision ?—in the frowning sky
Rises severe, a victim on its crest
Prepared and bound, a victim like a day
That hath no cloud, so beautiful and bright !
A woman fairer than her fairest sex.
And o'er her head a flag of triple tint,
And each an emblem of that nation's state.
Red for their blood, and Purple for their shame,
And White for all their craven cruelty,
Floats with denouncing spell—EQUALITY ;
The maddening charm, in whose bewildering rites
Woman is outraged, altars overthrown,
All sense of justice crushed, all arts destroyed,
And man becomes more savage than the beasts
That are his brethren, in the wilderness,
The bloody wilderness, once styled his world !

XL.

"EQUALITY ! I ken the cunning buzz,
Wherewith the drone would make us fondly deem
He shares the labour of the lively bee,
And claims the golden heritage of toil.
What this Equality ? this vagrant lust,
This panting of indefinite desire,
This cry of feeble spirits, which they crown
With attributes omnipotent, and make
A goddess of their Echo ? Is it Truth ?

Is't Justice? Is it aught that man believes?
 Is there a heart that to this flimsy plea
 Gives not the lie, howe'er the lip may move
 In plausible assent for wily end?
 Is Nature equal? Doth She say to man
 Go see the mountain in the vale subside;
 The ocean and the brook their waters share;
 See the bright stars with equal radiance blaze,
 With equal sweets the fragrant flowers bloom!
 And thou, Leviathan! whose heaving bulk
 Calls the quick colour from the sailor's cheek,
 What time some wave like to a ridgy hill
 Tipped with the snow, long, dark, and desolate,
 Save where the cresting waters whitely foam,
 Ere yet they break and burst into despair,
 What time some wave, some solitary wave,
 Itself an ocean, with the lowering sky,
 Blending its rising form, its mighty wings
 South-east, south-west extending, from the Cape
 Where valiant Vasco and his pallid crew
 The giant genius of the storm invoked,
 Sweeps its fell course, while mid the darkened world
 The thick slab gloom a single flash reveals,
 Struggling with forky light, the shriek insane
 Of moaning sea-birds tell the direful fate
 Of those that brave the tempest! Such thy power
 Awful Leviathan! yet must thou quit
 Thy coral thrones and sparry palaces,
 For lo! the minnow in his majesty
 Thy trident claims! Nor deem thy luckless lot
 Amid thy royal peers luckless alone:
 The sun-born eagle from his mountain throne
 His empyrean course no more pursues,
 But quits his radiant path and regal prey,
 And with the twilight-owl his sojourn keeps
 In gloomy groves and humid sepulchres,
 Feasting on vermin! Yes! where'er we gaze,
 GRADATION is the spell of Nature's sway,
 Hence Durability, the power of gods;
 Hence Order, Happiness, and Life; and hence

Of parts discordant one harmonious whole.
And shall a fitter type for man be found
Than this divine Creation? Shall the world
This haughty atom forms, his social world,
Reject the ties that things divine can bear?
Dark prophets of Equality, indeed
Doth blindness bind your vision? Doth a veil
Of all your busy arts the fate conceal?
To *level* not to *raise*, is all their end.
Where all are equal, all must be abased!

XLI.

"What constitutes a PEOPLE? not a crowd
Of vagrant beings like a locust horde
Over some fertile land their fatal wings
Furling with fell intent; their avid crow
Upon its fatness gorging: not a spawn
Of slime-begotten entities, the froth
Of some subsiding deluge, that a ray
The procreant envoy of the haughty Sun,
Calls from their oozy womb, a half-formed race
On berries banqueting; a doltish crew
Staring with wonder on their misshaped selves?
But Honour, Faith, and Justice, and the Lore
Long centuries yield, and skill in Arts refined,
And love of Fatherland, by olden thought
Endeared and sanctified, the mystic spell
Moon-eyed Tradition weaves; that beauteous witch
Who pours her philtre in our shadowy hearts:
And consecrating Customs that embalm
Ancestral deeds: and high Fraternities
That make the noble attributes of man,
Learning and Valour, Charity and Faith,
Before their sight in constant likeness dwell.
And chief of all, that social Discipline,
Instinctive in the heart of cultured man,
That prompts the weaker and the poor to view
In their more able brethren leaders apt
To guide and aid. In multitudes thus formed

A throne majestic yielding, and a band
 Of nobles dignified, and gentry pure,
 And holy priests, and reverend magistrates ;
 In multitudes thus formed, and highly trained
 Of Law and Arts, and truthful Prejudice
 And holy Faith, the soul-inspired race,
 I recognise a PEOPLE.

XLII.

“ But in vain
 These fruits we seek, EQUALITY, from thee !
 From the rich flavour of the stately trunk
 CONVENTION yields, attempting with disgust
 The crab-like produce of thy sapless twig !
 When were men equal ? Not the ermined stole
 The starry breast, the coroneted brow,
 The brodered banner, and the golden spur
 Form Aristocracy : mere Arts are these,
 To give a body to Opinion's breath,
 And permanence to fugitive Esteem.
 But the enduring power Genius wields,
 Resistless wheresoe'er it pours its course,
 That marks the man inspired from the crowd
 That gaze upon his glory. He who leads
 Victorious armies ; or his subtle soul
 Reveals in stately councils ; he who makes
 The Judgment Seat an oracle : the seer,
 That to the anguish of our earthly life
 Pours forth his heavenly balm, and whispers hope ;
 The merchant and his thousand argosies,
 Bearing exotic tribute—by such men
 Are nations formed, and flourish. To the rose,
 Its fragrance not more native than to States
 A class superior, formed of men like these.
 Art is man's Nature ; a transcendant gem
 His precious soul, that needs the sculptor's skill
 To demonstrate its lustre : chased and carved,
 And blazing in its burnished bed of pride,
 More natural far, than when its shrouded ray

Studs the damp cloister of some gloomy cave.
Where most developed is the human mind,
Most natural is man's lot. A fate he finds,
Where Constancy and Order hold their sway,
In ancient governments—that *Time* hath formed,
And not *Philosophers*—that prating crew,
With sciolistic babble ever prone
To prophesy the past. Society
Not their creation; and the plastic hand
That modelled its proportions, or robust,
Deep in the fathomed Earth its base enfixed—
Not owned by them—though now their reckless tongues
Slaver with drivelling after-thought, and wild
With impotence excited, dare to hope
They can create; when all their burning zeal
Is but a fruitless phantasy, that mocks
Their ever-baffled efforts.

XLIII.

“ Were indeed,
The creature of their care the thing they deem,
A creature, simple as their simple thoughts,
Ycleped Systems; if that sea profound,
The Human Mind, in which these reckless voyagers
Launch their light ballast and discordant crews
Were but the shoal of shallows they believe,
We then might trust their all-omitting charts,
And ponder o'er their mappery. In the sum
Of vast existence, with these skilful tellers,
Men count alike, as units, as they write
Their miserable rules, to all conceding
The self-same worth, the self-same qualities.
MAN is a being, various as the skies
That canopy his earth, and as that earth,
As manifold: the spirit of the winds,
The colour of the ocean, and the clouds;
Style of the soil, and current of the streams;
The sunbeam's strength; the radiance of the stars;
Form of the trees, and fragrance of the flowers,

Ductile and plastic, with his nature blend
 These mystic properties : these form the man.
 All-varying in the mountain, or the plain ;
 All-varying in the desert, or the isle ;
 On glittering iceberg or in palmy grove
 No more the same than the dim sluggard bear,
 Crawling with slippery paw o'er frozen mass,
 And tiger bursting with its radiant leap
 From out the crackling jungle. Moulded thus
 Man's nature, and thus formed his nature's laws,
 Grey customs, ancient habits, genial modes,
 That touch the heart, and from its impulse spring,
 And Codes and Constitutions long survive !

XLIV.

"EQUALITY ! A parricidal cry !
 'Tis INEQUALITY hath given them birth.
 Upon the reverend parent will they turn,
 That rocked their youthful cradle, while they slept
 Watching their slumbers with an anxious glance,
 That gave them food and raiment, holy thoughts,
 Knowledge of life, and skill in useful Arts,
 And planned and pondered for their worldly weal—
 This nursing mother for a common drab,
 That drops her bastards in a highway ditch—
 Will they desert ? Fling to the heady wind
 The tattered scroll of cold philosophy,
 That vaunts of human REASON : nobler far
 The faculty divine mankind impels,
 IMAGINATION on her airy throne
 Of Iris-painted clouds, with radiant smile
 Of hope celestial in the burnished sky,
 Her starry sceptre waving. Far beyond
 The vulgar visual Present man would strain
 His anxious ken : the mystical Unknown,
 Altar sublime whereto his lordly thoughts
 Would wing their soaring flight, and all its types,
 All that is grand and lovely, all that prompts
 His secret heart a higher fate to feel

Than the dull duties of his nether world,
Enlists his soul, an eager partisan
In the ennobling struggle. Man must rise :
And as upon the breast of slumbering Ocean
The wind descends, unseen, unrecognised,
A dusky spot that practised mariner
Can scarce detect, but soon the billows swell,
Then rise and foam, against the adverse shore,
Dashing with thundering charge ; their sprayey crests
Glancing and gleaming like the tossing plumes
Of hostile armies : clamour infinite,
And vast confusion :—thus, in human life,
Upon the mass the man of genius breathes
His spell creative, thus their swelling hearts
Rise to his charm !

XLV.

“ But now forsooth I learn,
Into a flat and stagnant pool the Sea
Of Life must change ; tideless and waveless now
Its breakers lie in equal platitude,
Unsullied by the passion of the wind. Ye Gods !
Profound cosmography ! On my bright throne
Reposing, in these starry halls above,
Behold once more before my presence bow
My gifted pages, they who erst I left
On earth, of kings and of their multitudes
The truest counsellors. But, ah ! how changed
Since that young hour when, on the mountain top,
Their first salute my gladdened sight inspired.
Where is thy solemn brow and mien assured,
Ennobling FAITH ? Art thou some vagabond
The earth hath scouted ? Yea ! this haggard look,
This air confounded, and this trembling breath—
Methinks it is some baffled hypocrite
Crouching before my glance ; and FEALTY,
Young FEALTY, that wert so brave and bright,
Withal so modest and so dutiful,
Art thou a traitor ? Hast thou left thy flag

A branded renegade? flouted and jeered,
 Running the gauntlet of a world's contempt?
 Hah! on those fronts where now those glowing signs,
 Sacred and regal? Is the Cross forsaken?
 Forgotten is the Crown? Your forms are wan
 And withered spirits. Tell your tidings dire.
 But Sorrow hath no plenitude of phrase,
 No flow of ready tongue. In silent anguish
 Before my throne they bowed their stifling hearts,
 And grasped my robe. Faith sighed, and Fealty sobbed.
 Then, like the groan of some dim dying storm,
 Faultered their broken speech: 'Master divine!
 Not hypocrites, not renegades are we,
 But faithful still. Woe! woe! unuttered woe!'

Thus spoke they, in my robe their visages
 Stricken and lorn concealing. 'Cheer ye up,'
 I answered, 'noble youths; where Honor is,
 All is not lost. That gone, Life is a world
 Indeed that hath no sun.' Whereat Faith rose,
 Slowly, but more composed, and grasped my hand;
 But his once radiant brother on his knees
 Still rested in his woful paroxysm,
 Nor raised that face that once the earth illumined,
 Fresh as the morning dew, bright as the morning star!

'Thy voice is wisdom, Magros,' said the child;
 'But all is lost, save Honor. Know ye, then,
 As, faithful watchers at our haughty post,
 Earth and its ordered fortunes, thy behest
 And counsel deep obeying, we remained,
 Behold, that Earth was troubled! Sounds unknown,
 Now known, affrightened all; clamor uncouth,
 And stunning outcry. Nations rose and stretched
 Their lazy bodies in the rushing air,
 As if the passage of the noisy breeze
 Had stirred some ancient life-drop in the pools
 The calm of centuries had clotted. Rumor
 Tripped up the heels of doting Memory,
 With all her legends, and with busy voice
 Told of some coming fate. The Past became
 The nausea of the Present. Omens dire

Struck cold the heart of man, and made all gaze
 With silent speech upon each other's face,
 Waiting who first should tell the thought all feared.
 Steeples were blasted by descending fire;
 Ancestral trees, that seemed the types of Time,
 Were stricken by strong winds, and in an hour
 The growth of ages shivered; from their base
 Fell regal statues; fountains changed to blood,
 And in the night, lights strange and quivering, scudded
 O'er the trembling sky.

XLVI.

“ ‘Heraldic portents
 Of advent awful! For behold! now rose
 A Form so vast, so terrible, so strange,
 That even eyes, that arch-angelic shapes
 Have passed before, upon the darkened earth,
 Dropped their dull orbs. A thousand arms it had,
 Or seemed to have; a thousand tongues, the same.
 Its voice a chorus, and its shape a crowd!
 Nor when from out the icy pinnacles
 That crown the savage Caspian, Elburz peak,
 Sublime and snowy, great Caucasian king,
 Or from the unknown desarts that their breast
 Illimitable spread, Tartarian tracts,
 Or blander wilds of Araby the blest,
 Issues some orient horde, like desperate beast,
 Tiger with radiant stripes, or dazzling pard,
 That hunger spurs from out its secret den,
 Upon the fertile vales and fruitful plains
 About to raven: like a spreading cloud
 Their host unnumbered, by some haughty chief,
 Suldaun, or Scheik, or Atabek, or Khan,
 Led with destroying skill: not even then,
 Ravage more dire than now proclaims the course
 Of this unheard-of scourge ycleped CHANGE!

XLVII.

" From off the brow of kings it clutches crowns,
 And snaps the crosier of denouncing priests,
 And tramples on tribunals : hallowed tomes,
 Collected reason of a thousand ages,
 Hurls to the flames, and calls around on man
 To act without example—Edict dread !
 The great machine of life it seems to stop :
 No certain laws control, no certain thoughts
 Impel the Being whose long travelled course
 The cynosure Experience guided sure.
 The pallid student flings away the book
 That once was Truth, and waits in silent wonder
 The future oracles : the artist quits
 The art that quittance him, for useless now
 The skill is voted : baffled traders find
 The wants their fathers fed for many an age
 Are, strange to say, exhausted. Patient Labor
 Restless becomes, and sickens of the toil
 No certain guerdon waits. Study and Skill,
 Order's choice offspring, on the teeming breast
 Begot of fruitful Prejudice, now shrivel,
 Fed by no nursing streams. The world is blank.
 The adamant chain of generations—
 Its links are broken ; nought connects the Present
 Or with the Past or Future ; men become
 But as the summer flies that gild an hour,
 Then die and rot. Unto the self-same point
 CHANGE and CORRUPTION drive their fatal course,
 Barbarity their goal ; and when thy form
 August upon the crumbling shape of Earth
 First lighted, quick Destruction's subtle seed
 Were not more germinant than at this hour,
 When bold Subversion on his crafty face
 A gilded visor claps, and dubs himself—
 REFORM !

XLVIII.

"A Solemn and a sacred thing
 We deem a STATE: upon this holy ark
 Not all must rest their hand: but veil his head,
 And from his sandals wipe profaning dust,
 Must the approaching votary: with awe
 And pious caution let him scan if Time
 Hath sullied aught its brightness: as we gaze
 Upon a father's wound, or dread decay,
 With hope as much as fear; and dare to think
 That most beneficent and reverend form
 Shall yet survive and flourish; but indeed
 The children of their country now would seize
 Their aged sire, and piecemeal hack his frame,
 And in some cauldron's magic bubble thrust
 The severed members, in the mad belief
 That poisonous weeds and spell of muttered power
 May nature renovate; this let us learn—
 That little virtue lies in forms of rule;
 But in the mind and manners of those ruled
 Subsists the fate of nations: that same power
 That called the heroic Roman from his plough,
 And placed him victor in a conquering car,
 Saviour of freemen! when young Julius rose,
 Becomes the instrument that plants his foot,
 Restless for empire, on his country's neck!

XLIX.

"Thus mused we, MAGROS, while the monster Change
 Swept its fell course,—then starting to the field
 With our united chivalry, went forth
 His force to combat. Ah! forgive these tears,
 Pardon these pallid cheeks, these faltering words.
 Nay! sob not so, my brother; thy fond hand
 Still I enclasp, and still fraternal care
 Shall soothe thy sorrow. Woe and shame are ours,
 For vain our effort, and our fate a stain
 Upon Heaven's 'scutcheon. In his baffling grasp
 Our forms the monster seized. The bitter tale

Oh ! let me make it brief. Upon the sign,
 The holy sign, that stamps my hallowed brow,
 It spat, and with its burning slaver washed
 The cross from off my front : for Fealty there,
 Upon his crown a poisonous flame it breathed,
 And straight that bright and flashing diadem
 All black and grim became, as if the cirque
 Binding dim Pluto's brow. Then on the Earth
 Our lifeless frames it dashed, and its dread course
 Resistless urged !'

L.

" The holy Innocent
 Parleys no more : his mournful task is done ;
 And with it seems his life ; for lifeless there
 Methought he lay ; his brother by his side :
 Closed their fond eyes, and their fraternal arms
 Clasped round each other's neck. Upon my throne
 Their senseless shapes I raised ; and on their cheek
 One slight embrace I pressed. Short time I ween
 For sorrow, and for sweet solicitude
 Ill season now. My beryl helm I seize,
 And on my swelling brow I thrust its plume.
 Give me my ruby shield, and that dread spear
 That erst I waved upon the mountain top,
 When nations rose at its creating sweep :
 Not to create its office now, but slay.
 I looked around me at these glorious seats,
 As if they soon should listen to my praise,
 When victor I returned o'er monstrous Change ;
 Then on the earth, like a wild bird of chase,
 That with its keen and glowing eye its quarry
 Far marks, I darted, and of mortal soil
 The sluggard clods soon touched.

LI.

" Not long to seek
 The dreaded monster ; lighted by the flame
 Of burning cities, and by savage yells,

Securely guided, soon the expected foe
 My vision meets, uprooting holy fanes,
 And the embattled heights of ancient thrones
 Sapping with subtle arts. No time for speech ;
 Nor seek I that which nought to me of joy,
 Profit, or truth can yield ; my trusty lance
 High in the air I poise, about to pierce :
 When, marvel of all marvels, o'er my foe
 A silver radiance gathers—gathering, glows.
 No monster there, no thousand arms I view ;
 No thousand tongues, harsh as the Boreal blast,
 My ear insult ; but archangelic form
 And voice of heavenly music. Lyridon,
 My rival and my peer, before me stands.
 ' Ill met,' I cried, but dropped my weapon's power,
 That ne'er on starry forms may raise its strength :
 ' Ill met,' I cried, ' and could not Hell send forth
 Some power wherewith to combat ! Is it thou,
 Celestial born, that thus infernal deeds
 Achiev'st in safety ! It were braver, brother,
 To do an angel's work that thou might'st meet
 A devil's spite. Thy course, methinks, is clear ;
 An angel, devils must applaud thy deed ;
 And we thy peers are hindered from the fray,
 Where blood celestial heavenly spears may pierce.'
 ' Thy taunts all own, great Magros, and thy force
 Of words sarcastic,' Lyridon replied ;
 ' But not by taunts or flouts, by jeers or jests,
 Shall man be hindered from the work divine.
 My counsel ever urges ; equal Spirits
 Are we ; our power equal : not our cause,
 For mine shall triumph. And methinks I mark
 Upon thy careful brow a gloomy cloud,
 Great brother ! What ! has Faith his unction lost ?
 Or Fealty proved false ? Thy many spells
 Perchance enchant no more.'

“ ‘ Thy brain is gay,’

Quick I replied. ‘ Destruction's fummy wreaths
 Impel thy fancy to unwonted life ;
 But not for gibes or taunts this fitting time,

Or rival jeers. Gloomy, perchance, I am :
 I grieve for Man ; not for my cause I fear,
 The cause of Truth. But when indeed I muse
 O'er all the barbarising strife, the woe,
 The agony, the tears, the carking care,
 Fast flowing gore and ruthless villany,
 The kindred slaughtered, and the ravished hearth,
 The treason, and the dungeon, and the rack,
 Restless with varied torture, and the hope
 Delusive, ever baffled, than the flame
 And the hot faggots of fanatic zeal
 More terrible, and heady martyrdom
 Sealing the faith which yet is but a lie,
 The cloud deceptive, that a myriad dupes
 Rush to embrace, and deem the airy phantom
 A bright Divinity ; to tyrants turned
 Benignant monarchs, even from very fear,
 And the wide stage for knaves to play their part,
 The leaders of the People, with their vows
 Breath'd with an oath, and registered at once
 In Heaven's great book as damning perjuries ;
 When I remember with prophetic pang,
 That all the misery Man yet has proved,
 And misery undreamed of, must await
 The combat of our creeds ; I would some god
 Would by a word the course of ages leap,
 And stamp at once the Truth that all must own.'

LII.

Ceased the great voice of Magros ; ceasing, yet
 It seemed to sound ; so deep that mighty breath,
 Its solemn tones when hushed make Silence Pain ;
 And in all ears the immortal echo rests,
 Divinely musical ! As oft we feel
 In Alpine regions wandering, where the pine,
 Shaggy and savage, from its rigid bed
 Of snow eternal springs, if chance to gaze
 Upon some mighty cataract, the fall
 Of some broad river from a mountain's crest,

Wandering all day, within our awe-struck ear
Echoes the roar sublime ; though as the Eve
Draws on and calls the peasant to his hearth,
Sounds softer, softer sights, our trembling sense
Refresh and renovate : the hum of bees,
And low of kine returning, and the voice
Of festive youth, or chime of sacred bell !

END OF BOOK THE FIRST.

THE PLEA OF LYRIDON,
THE GENIUS OF FEDERALISM,
FORMS
THE SECOND BOOK
OF
THE REVOLUTIONARY EPICK. *

The Revolutionary Epick

THE WORK OF
DISRAELI THE YOUNGER,
AUTHOR OF
"THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ROMANCE."

BOOKS II. & III.
CONTAINING
THE PLEA OF LYRIDON, THE GENIUS OF
FEDERALISM;
AND THE FIRST PART OF
THE CONQUEST OF ITALY.

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AMID the passions of a struggling world,
 On me descends the spirit of great song.
 A holy office mine, and noble aim :
 To teach to monarchs and to multitudes
 Their duties and their rights ; the end to teach
 Of their existence ; and, serene and just,
 From out their mightiest annals to create
 A mightier moral : this my theme sublime !

II.

Now silence reigns in Heaven : and as men watch
 The break of cheering dawn, when through the night
 They long have journeyed ; to some distant shrine
 Pilgrims devote, or orient caravan
 Charged for some costly mart ; thus on the form
 Of radiant Lyridon each gaze is fixed ;
 When, raising in the sky his graceful arm,
 Upon the blazing orb with glance serene
 Gazing undazzled, sound those thrilling tones
 That unto desperate man still promise hope !

III.

“ Ancient of Days ! perchance this voice may sound
 Strange to the music of these starry spheres,
 Yet are its tones not new, though rarely heard ;
 For ever since the primal birth of things,
 And the expression of thy bounteous will
 Called forth a beauteous order from the void,
 My sighs have blended with the hopes of Man ;
 For who could gaze upon the lovely Earth
 Nor wish to make its habitants as fair ?
 And mark the natural justice of thy love
 Shedding on all alike its blooming gifts,

Nor mourn to feel the child of thy chief care,
 The crowning glory of Almighty skill,
 Should in this smiling land alone be sad !

IV.

" Not this thine aim, Omnipotent, when first,
 Like some tall cedar in the wilderness,
 He rose supreme : amid the vigorous strong,
 And fair amid the beautiful ; his eyes
 Like stars ; a cloudless heaven his fearless front,
 Serene and bright, and moving in his bliss
 Like majesty unquestioned ; with a grace
 That knew no art, and genial dignity.

V.

" Fair Earth was then an amaranthine garden,
 Where Melody and Perfume, twin-born sprites,
 Winged their enchanting course ; each trilling gale
 Breaking with musky odours, each deep scent
 Harmonious to the rapt and ravished soul !
 Dim bowers and lakes translucent, flowery meads
 Swept by the sunshine, o'er whose fragrant breast
 Flits the soft shadow of some jocund bird ;
 And graceful forms of many beauteous things
 That now are dreams, yet fitting well that Earth
 Then even than these more fair ! Amid this scene,
 Where splendor blended with serenity,
 A mountain rose, e'en than the loftiest heights,
 That with their mantles blue and snowy caps
 Bounded this Paradise, more lofty still,
 And one side of this mount might seem a chace,
 A pleasant chace, where golden bugles call,
 And cry of eager hounds ; tall trees arose,
 Arrayed with painted birds, amid the woods
 That under spread, and from whose rustling shades
 Sprung tawny antlers, or the sportive form
 Of some wild fawn. And here and there a crag,
 Jutting, the semblance of a fortress bore,
 Stern, grey, and grim amid the blander scene.

Snowy and brave, pavilioned heights here rose,
Bright plumps of spears, and flaunty gonfalons.
High over all, crowning the immediate height
Of this biforked hill, a fountain burst
Immense, uprushing, column huge of wave !
A thousand feet the sprayey sky within
The watery pillar springs, nor sunset's dies
More gorgeous than the variegated garb
That robes its power. From its purple form
Flashing with gold and crimson, silver streams
Descend, and flow the mountain's side along,
Until they meet, and form a course pellucid,
Sparkling, and bright. But o'er the adverse peak
Broods a black cloud, within that world serene
The only blot. Beneath its nursing shade
Bubbles a burning spring, sulphureous fount ;
Blue tongues of flame from out its dreadful tide
Uplancing. From its dark basaltic womb,
Like some vast serpent from its midnight den,
Forth pours its volumed course, and winds its way
The adverse mount along. A dismal land !
Caverns, and gloomy grots, and shaggy trees,
Pyramidal and dark, by raven haunted,
Vulture, or owl ; and here and there arose
A spire grotesque or hooded cupola,
A gleamy crescent, or a solemn cross ;
And crouched upon the tombstones many a form
Of gaunt Anatomy that seemed to move,
Or satyrs leering in a sepulchre.
Though ever and anon some fairer shade
That should be woman, or majestic port
Of what seemed heroes, flitted o'er the scene,
And vanished as you gazed. These wilds among
And wilder habitants, the river flowed,
Until, the margin of the mount encircling,
It met its brighter brother : thence united
The confluent streams are one, and guide their course
Where a most gorgeous basin meets their tide,
And meeting, ne'er o'erflows. Of adamant
That mighty reservoir ; its scope secure

Might screen a navy from a tempest's wrath.
 Know ye the sparkling tide was TYRANNY ;
 And SUPERSTITION was the darker stream !

VI.

“ And from the waters of these poisoned fountains,
 Around whose base the spell-bound multitude
 Have wildly quaffed, slaking celestial thirst
 With hellish draughts, flows forth the Misery
 That makes men pale ; for ever at their hearts
 Gnawing, resistless, with corroding fang.
 All-selfish thrones, and altars red with gore,
 Kings without heart, and pontiffs without faith ;
 And rigid judgment-seats, that only serve
 As ante-rooms to dungeons ; and the lust
 Of martial murder ; and the unhallowed power
 Of desecrating wealth ; and falsest Custom
 That consecrates a lie, and clouds with grace
 Hoary Imposture ; and the cunning creed
 That bids the Many labor for the Few,
 Filling the Earth with famine and disease,
 Maternal Earth, so fruitful and so pure !
 The cunning creed that hath enslaved mankind,
 Making existence venal ; since the wretch
 Who hath no prospect but a life of toil,
 In the dim madness of his desperate soul,
 Barter his being for the craven chance
 Of sharing in the plunder he abhors ;
 And while within his true and inmost heart,
 The prosperous villain and his prospering craft,
 Alike he curses, the all maddening error,
 That finds in crime successful cogent plea
 For further shame, still lures and still enslaves.

VII.

“ BODY and SPIRIT are the mighty pinions
 On which Man floats in proud security,
 And while their force with equal faith he trusts,
 Soars through a cloudless life of ceaseless bliss.

Woe to the hands that clip these glorious wings!
 The tyrant and the priest, whate'er their creed
 Or form of domination; whether one,
 A solitary slave with jewelled brow,
 Reposing in his golden palaces,
 Or leading steeled legions to the war
 That gains a province by a nation's blood;
 Or galling rule of senatorial pride,
 The oligarchic scorn that will not spare
 Even a patriot to a perilled state,
 But from their ermined order; crafty heads
 Who smile on scholars when their curious lore
 May cloud a nation's rights; and foster arts
 To blind the wildered senses of the crowd.

VIII.

"I said my voice was old, though rarely heard:
 And is it then so passing wild and strange,
 Mankind should struggle to be wise and free?
 And yielding to the spirit of their frame
 Claim, e'en with threat'ning grasp and eager voice,
 The blissful heritage so long denied?
 Or weary of the dull, desponding bondage,
 That makes to lie their nature; and ordains
 To fawn, to flatter, and to fear, their life?
 What! shall the trampled worm ne'er turn? ay, sting!
 And prove a serpent to the oppressor's heel.
 Must man for ever tremble, ever watch
 With anxious eye another's callous glance?
 And waste the fragrance of his faithful soul
 Upon some jaded sense, that barely owns
 The perfume it destroys? Must he for ever
 Lead the same villanous life of shuffling Chance
 And bitter Destiny, and must for ever
 His hopes be crushed and blasted? Oh! must Love,
 That orb long clouded of his twilight life,
 Must it then never rise, and bathe his days
 In warmth and lustre? Shall his very virtues
 Be changed to vices by this withering rule;

Shall he be only faithful as a slave,
 And only pious as a dupe? Shall Fear
 Be the sole prompter of his honesty?
 Shall his Necessity alone give alms,
 Stripes make him learned, Wages make him brave,
 Lust be his only Love, his only Passion, Hate?
 Shall all these multiplied curses on his head
 Fall like the storm, and shall he not recoil,
 And wrap his mantle round his dizzy skull;
 Or in the nearest cavern's gloomy mouth
 Seek refuge, though it be a lion's lair?

IX.

"I said my voice was old, though rarely heard,
 And yet it sounded on that ancient day
 When in MYCALE'S fane deputed chiefs
 Vowed to the God their federal gratitude,
 Who bore them o'er the waters of the isles,
 Led by a King; who as he touched the shore,
 Soon to re-echo with their common joy,
 His useless sceptre in the liberal waves,
 Flung with triumphant smile of noble scorn!
 Ah! see the shepherd and his Carian flock,
 Fly from the rising turrets that invade
 Meander's meads. See! sweet Cayster's swans,
 Arching their snowy necks with beauteous pride,
 Glide through the budding gardens of its banks;
 And from the ruins of immortal Troy
 To where enamoured worshippers invoke
 The rosy Goddess of the Cnidian shrine;
 A land of silver streams and pastures green,
 Studded with columned cities as with gems,
 Sparkling beneath the warm and azure sky;
 The happiness of equal man attests
 A social multitude. Of genial laws
 Offspring content and joyous! O'er the plain,
 Mark their quick chariots in the rival course!
 See here the discus hurled, and there the grasp
 Of panting wrestlers! While the crowded cirque

Speak with their eyes and with their hands incite,
 Cheering and drooping garlands! Happy race!
 Who soothe with public pastime private toil,
 Their sport a duty, and their labour love!

X.

"As in the Night, the anxious mariner
 Doth gaze upon the glowing orbs above,
 And by celestial light his course pursue;
 And while pursuing, lo! an earthly star,
 That crowns some Pharos with its steady beam,
 Blends with the radiant host, and calls a vow
 Of offering from the watchful steersman's lip;
 Prophetic of the port, of rest and joy
 Prophetic, rest and joy and long repose:
 So in the night of ages, when the ray
 Of heavenly lore, that glimmers in our hearts,
 Breaks but the gloom, riseth some lofty sage,
 The depth of darkness with his sheeny wit
 Piercing, and shedding lustre on our course
 Obscure and dubious, beacon of his race!
 Thus SOLON rose—my pupil! Sage serene!
 Deep with the wisdom, which, that pregnant mind,
 The conduct of his kind who fain would sway,
 Alone should prompt—the knowledge of their hearts!
 'Twas his benignant voice that first proclaimed,
 Labour was Property, and Virtue, Worth
 That man ennobled, though no Tyrian garb
 Of flowing purple robed his swelling soul.
 Gentle and mild, he loved his fellow-men,
 And felt for all their frailties, though himself
 Serene and stainless as the marble fanes
 That crowned the glorious dwelling of his race,
 The fragrant City of the Violet Crown!
 Divine EQUALITY! thou art a God
 Indeed omnipotent! What faded race,
 Forgotten dynasty of mightiest kings,
 Monarchs of millions, born to watch their glance,
 Can match the all-enduring monument

A slender band of freemen raised to thee !
 A city like the dream of youthful bard,
 Reposing in the shade of summer trees,
 And pressing to his eyes his magic hand,
 To call up visions of a fairer world :
 Blue ocean, bowery plain, and azure sky,
 And marble walls, and free-born citadel,
 Glittering with snowy columns in the Sun ;
 Statues of ivory, tablets like the blaze
 Of the far-flashing twilight of the land ;
 And choral theatres, where the Poet's voice
 Blends with the whisper of the delicate air,
 The messenger of nature to his soul ;
 And gardens of delight, in whose green glades
 And fragrant groves, or by the mossy verge
 Of sparkling fountain, or serener stream,
 Conversing Sages teach to genial youth
 Ennobling precepts : to be wise and free,
 Refined and virtuous, is their theme sublime ;
 Or for the high and passionate hour prepare,
 When from the Bema's all-subduing throne
 A voice may sway the fortunes of a world !
 Divine EQUALITY, thou art a God
 Omnipotent indeed ! Thy sacred fire
 Burns now in later temples, not to fall
 Like thine old shrines ; yet who can e'er forget,
 Whose soul indeed thy noble faith inflames,
 Thy broken altar on ATHENA'S hill !

XI.

" And though no more thy truth-inspiring faith
 Kindle thy shrine on that illustrious mount,
 Yet long I lingered in the genial land
 That seemed at once thy cradle and thy tomb ;
 Mused with the Theban in his virtuous tent,
 And thundered in the tones of that high voice
 That shook the tyrant on his rising throne ;
 And swore by the immortal memory
 Of those that died on famous Marathon ;

The slayers of the satraps, and their trains
Of servile nations ; Freedom yet should breathe
The inspiring perfume of a Grecian sky,
Land where the bee is busy in the air,
Seeking the marble mountains for his thyme.
Yet ere I fled thee, ere, enchanting Greece,
O'er thy fair crags and olive-crowned plains,
I shed my parting tear ; I dared to guide
A patriot's blade in PHILOPÆMEN'S hand ;
Yes ! ere I fled, ARATUS to my robe
Clung with despair, and died in my embrace.

XII.

“ The voice of Freedom on the Italian wind,
Caught like the rising storm my lonely ear.
The eternal ROME still stands : her very ruins
Filling the pilgrim with a breathless awe ;
And still the statues of her heroes summon
The soul to deathless deeds, that will outlive
Even those mighty monuments ; her name
Sounds like a trumpet in the ear of man,
And stirs the laggard current of his blood,
Like the wind breathing on the torpid wave.
From the first moment that the wolf her mother,
Stern nurse of sterner children, poured her stream
Of martial milk from her immortal dug,
The spirit of her strong career was mine ;
And the bold Brutus but propelled the blow,
Her own and Nature's laws alike approved.
Oh ! for an hour of that victorious spring,
When seated on my Capitolian throne,
I called the nations to her equal sway,
And made them brethren in her free-born fame ;
Bright age, when heroes left their conquering car
To seize the plough, and teach the arts of peace ;
When FABIUS counselled, and ATILIUS died,
And CATO'S old grey hairs more reverence caught
Than royal brows ; and when, serene as Truth,
The SCIPIOS mingled in the market-place.

XIII.

"And could the lyre of VIRGIL, he who sang
 The arts of war and peace and rural joy,
 In strains e'en sweeter than the syren shell,
 By the soft waters of the Capuan sea,
 Breathing divine: his own Parthenope!
 Or even the voice that startled senates shook,
 Or in the Forum poured persuasive tones,
 O! all-accomplished TULLIUS, e'en thy voice,
 Ardent and sage! Could even that dazzling form,
 That dazzling form that with excess of light,
 Blinded the vision of his wondering race;
 Could even CÆSAR and his lightning fame,
 The marvel of mankind, whom even those
 Who stabbed him, struck with quivering tears of shame,
 Compensate for these worthies, and their lives
 Of grand simplicity;—far wealthier these,
 With their scant acres and self-guided yoke,
 Than Sallust in his gardens, though a king
 Purchased the Eden for a nation's sport.

XIV.

"But gorgeous ASIA on her golden throne,
 The Cleopatra of man's destiny;
 Brilliant and dusky as a summer night,
 That wooeth with its warm and wanton breath
 The softening heart to fancies softer still,
 Smiled on these free-born warriors with a glance
 More fatal than her flashing scimitar;
 Checked the strong current of their full career,
 And called them, pale with passion, to her side;
 Lo! on her couch of mad voluptuousness,
 The Capitolian hero wildly thrown,
 Pouring the passion of his eager soul,
 A tribute to her never-cloying charms;
 And gazing with the spell-bound glance of love,
 Upon the entrancing eyes that fondly smile,
 E'en as they sap the marrow of his heart.
 The chant of eunuchs and the dance of girls

Solace the conqueror in his Median robe ;
 His useless armour on the glittering walls,
 Hung for the wonder of a nerveless race,
 A monument of man before his fall :
 While the proud eagle quits his skyey mount,
 And builds his eyry in a rosy bower !

XV.

"Is there no hope for Nations? must for ever
 The spring-tide of their force but bear a crown
 Of barren sea-weed to the callous cliff?
 Upon the regal Palatine I stood,
 And o'er the desperate fortunes of their fate
 Poured forth the scalding tear of sinking shame,
 The tear that Solitude alone can view,
 For baffled purposes and broken hopes
 Meet nurse and stern! Is there indeed no hope?
 Oh! is there in the heart of noble man
 Indeed a drop inherent with his life,
 Tainting his nature with a moral pest
 Foulter than all the plagues of lazar-house?
 Is Virtue but a shade, as Brutus sighed,
 And Freedom but the rainbow of a storm?
 O Man! that should be happy, and thou Earth,
 Made for the garden of his pleasant life,
 So just, so gay, so generous, and so fair;
 The mother, from whose sweet and prodigal heart
 The child should ne'er be weaned; why have they torn
 Thy offspring from thy bland and fruitful heart
 To suckle them on blood, and fill their eyes,
 Their own fraternal eyes, with mutual hate
 And struggling tyranny? Alas! alas!
 I weep for thee, whose only offering now
 Are tears not hopes,—tears bitter as thy fate!
 Thus o'er the proud imperial Palatine
 A Spirit sorrowed o'er a fallen race
 While NERO revelled in the halls below;
 Then stretching in the air my dusky wings
 And gazing on these radiant stars above,
 I left his bloody realm that was the world.

XVI.

"A thousand years I wandered round thy throne
 A silent suppliant, my imploring eye
 Telling the secrets of my withering heart;
 A thousand years, and yet that mighty brow,
 Stern as primæval mountains, would not yield
 The sanction of its nod to lingering hope.
 Vain watch, and vainer longing! We, indeed,
 Are the great emanations of thy will,
 To work thy purpose, oft to us unknown;
 But when thy spirit breathed our mighty birth
 It willed that in the musing of our mind
 Our various conduct should its aim receive.
 Free agents in a course before decreed;
 Deep Truth beyond the ken of human sight!

XVII.

"Man struggled yet: Tradition's still small voice,
 Bearing the memory of heroic deeds,
 Mixed with the groan of misery, and soothed
 The wrongs of outraged Nature: men arose
 Whom Cato would have loved, and Cæsar feared.
 And many a State recalled the ancient days
 When men were noble but by noble deeds.
 But what to me with my past agony,
 Was sea-born VENICE and her thousand isles,
 When Rome had fallen? and to me what hope
 In lively FLORENCE and her laughing vale,
 The airy Athens of the Apennine,
 When in the crumbling fane of Pericles,
 Their orisons Spiridion's saintly monks
 Mumbled, devoutly dull; what even, to me,
 Was the bold SWITZER and his leagued tribes,
 When on the glorious coast that once had beamed
 With federal genius, brilliant as its sky,
 The crescent glittered and the turban ruled!

XVIII.

"Is there no hope for Nations? is it doomed
 Man to be wise must ever be alone?
 Is KNOWLEDGE but a solitary sage,
 Wandering in silence on a starry plain?
 Oh! let him haunt the busy market-place,
 And mingle with the restless multitude,
 And blend with all the duteous life of man,
 Smile in the hall, and solace in the hut;
 For Knowledge is a spell, since even brows
 With diadems encirqued and regal gems
 Bow to the sages whose creative lore
 Unfolds the secrets of enveloped life,
 And amplifies their joyance. Woe to him!
 The sage who will not cross a tyrant's hall,
 And fawn upon his purple; oft for him
 A sterner couch the glimmering dungeon yields.
 Woe to the voice that in the wilderness
 They call the world, the people's cause invokes,
 And scares the riot of the bloated few
 With its denouncing thunder! Then some strength
 Knowledge methinks may own, or else the strong
 Were not so jealous of its mystic force.
 Yes! it is POWER sharper than the sword,
 And swifter than the arrow in its flight,
 A shield robuster than the sevenfold hide
 Studded with brass or knob of argentry:
 The moral armour of enlightened man!
 And cannot KNOWLEDGE, like a rushing river,
 Visit all nations with its freshening tide,
 And treasure-laden waters—but for ever,
 Like some fair fountain in a desert, sparkle;
 In whose bright tide, reclining on the marge,
 The curious traveller dips his classic vase?

XIX.

"Then there were hope for Nations; then indeed
 Man would not shame his Maker with his woes,
 But share his god-like attributes; to know,

To love, to bless, and to enjoy! But vain
 These musings! Hath not Deity itself,
 Incarnate in a palmy land of light,
 Whispered eternal wisdom in a voice
 Mild as a mother, with a father's lore?
 And is not this pure creed and purer life
 A tortured precedent and lying test
 For all that's wildly false and darkly bad;
 The very dregs of priestcraft, cunning copy
 Of Hebrew fierceness and of Pagan lust?
 When Inspiration's self is but the prop
 Of vast Profaneness, balancing on high
 Imposture's airy cupola, in vain
 We seek for truth in philosophic groves!
 Those groves are desolate: green Academe
 No longer echoes to a melody
 Sweeter than all its trilling nightingales;
 The garden's pleasure and the porch's pride;
 Pride that ennobles, Pleasure that refines;
 No more instruct; and even the cup has touched
 The sacred lip of SOCRATES in vain.
 Amid the gloomy storm of human life,
 Truth is a quivering flash that often blasts
 The being it enlightens: Power and Faith,
 The clouds and winds that cloak the sun of light,
 Hurry the scudding elements along
 Fearful of pause, lest from the blue serene
 A piercing beam dispel their awful sway!
 Thus in these heavenly halls, alone and sad
 A Spirit pondered o'er the fate of man.

XX.

" 'Tis found, 'tis found! with joyous pinions darting
 Through the blue regions of the gladdened air,
 Once more on earth's exulting sod I vaulted,
 And laughed with rapture on its thrilling breast.
 'Tis found, 'tis found! the Art, the wondrous Art,
 That multiplies at will the voice of man.
 Man startled at his own creative word,

Like some fresh hunter on an Alpine morn,
 Finding a chorus in ten thousand vales,
 And stopping in his course with wild delight
 To listen to his airy progeny.
 'Tis found, 'tis found! the Art, the wondrous Art,
 That maketh Wisdom counsel in all roofs,
 And the strong rivers of the various world
 Re-echo with the voice of Poesy.
 'Tis found, 'tis found! the Art, the wondrous Art
 That binds the sage's solitary brow
 With an imperial halo, before whose
 All-dazzling radiance jewelled brows grow pale,
 Although each trembling gem may chance to count
 The tribute of a province; sword and sceptre,
 Though built of gold and cedar, and though tinged
 By far Damascus' art with watered charm,
 Yield to the single pinion of a bird
 Dropped from the ruffled plumage of the wing
 Their falcons may have fed on: yes! 'tis found,
 The Art that changed the nature of a race.
 Between the Past and Present, a vast gulf,
 Chaotic offspring of an earthquake's throes,
 Divides the fate of Man; from each high brow
 Man gazes on his brother with a fond
 But fearful admiration; one with hope
 Radiant and light of heart; the antique brood
 More sad, yet noble with their baffled fate;
 Their mind, their heart, their life, no more the same;
 Their very nature changed, and like alone in form.

XXI.

"There is a sunny garden in the world,
 The azure flowing of a glorious river,
 Between green banks of vine-enamoured hills,
 Crowned with grey towers, of many a lively town
 And hamlet gay the hoary sentinels;
 The dew was on its fruit and freshened flowers,
 And many a carol from its joyous birds
 Hailed the first promise of the golden light

Tinging the white sails of its lucid wave ;
 When, wandering in the pasture of its meads,
 A young and beauteous maiden met my sight,
 Playing and singing in the cheerful scene
 With voice more joyous than its joyous birds,
 And visage fresher than its freshened flowers.
 ' Oh ! young and beauteous maiden, tell me true,'
 Thus to this airy thing I fondly sighed,
 ' And who are thou that on this golden morn
 Playest amid the fragrant meads of RHINE,
 With voice more joyous than its joyous birds,
 And visage fresher than its freshened flowers ?'
 And when the maiden heard the gentle sound,
 She looked around from off her graceful labour,
 Twining the heartsease in a coronal,
 And a slight blush, a rosy cloud of light,
 Sailed o'er the sunshine of her sparkling face ;
 But soon it vanished, and serene and mild,
 With flutelike voice the maiden answered me,
 ' I am the child of lovers too long parted,
 And born upon the sunny banks of Rhine.
 My name OPINION is ; my saintly mother
 Long known to few, but by those few adored,
 Was from my mighty sire, her kinsman true,
 Who loved her more for sympathy than blood,
 By wicked arts long parted, but in vain ;
 For in this gracious land they one day met,
 And by the kindness of a holy man,
 PHYSICAL STRENGTH and MORAL were united,
 And I, the pledge of their true love, was born.
 And round the cradle of my infant hours,
 KNOWLEDGE and TRUTH were nursing ministers,
 And by their side too, never-dying HOPE,
 Just waking from a trance that seemed like death,
 Rose with a crimson flush upon her cheek,
 The beauteous twilight of a coming bliss,
 And gazed upon the new-born babe with joy.'

XXII.

" Thus, answered me this young and beauteous maiden,
 One morn upon the sunny banks of Rhine,
 With voice more joyous than its joyous birds,
 And visage fresher than its freshened flowers.
 ' O young and beauteous maiden,' I replied,
 ' Thy fair and glorious parents well I know ;
 Long have I laboured in their pious cause,
 And long desired to blend their fates in one.
 Ah ! could'st thou dream of all the withering woe,
 The hate, the blood, the awful desolation,
 Their loves have cost a sympathising race.
 Those eyes, that sparkle like an antelope's,
 Glancing around, unconscious of their light,
 Would form a current swifter than the stream
 That rushes at our feet. No more, sweet child ;
 But to thy home, and with thee I will go :
 For I am one that soon will be required.'

XXIII.

" And this fair child became my precious charge,
 And grew in years, and loveliness, and hope ;
 And, from the crowding votaries of her fate,
 Two spirits I selected for her guides,
 To lead her in the path I long had tracked,
 And tend the budding promise of her mind.
 THE FIRST was one whom docile Youth adores,
 When on the reverend knee with rapture leans
 Marvelling Childhood with its wondering eye,
 Chained by the magic voice, that like a stream
 Flowing, and as it flows imparting life,
 Its noble treasure pours ; the magic voice
 Enchanting the wild age, that trembling flies
 From dusty spells bound up in dingy tomes,
 Firm but indulgent ; ardent yet resolved,
 In patient constancy and sanguine faith ;
 Unwearied in his watch, though wearying never,
 But charming with his care ; his luminous mind
 Clothing all things in dazzling hues of light ;

Sustaining youthful Wisdom's trembling pinion
 By his high-soaring fancy: thus arose
 LUTHER divine! Thus o'er OPINION'S childhood
 Her gifted tutor watched. But when rolled on
 The gradual years, and on her beaming front
 Thought, like a cloud upon a sunny peak,
 Would often rest; and her wild sportive limbs
 Gambolled no longer in the flowery meads,
 Chasing with eager eye and airy voice
 The glittering butterfly and golden bee;
 And in the sunshine's truth-devoted mirror,
 A longer shade her graceful stature shed;
 A mighty volume in her ready hand
 CALVIN reposed: and soon, sedate and grave,
 Upon the page profound her fair eyes fixed,
 Within her learned bower OPINION sate.
 Lo! as she reads, the rising storm of thought,
 Gathers in terror o'er her lucid brow,
 And lightning flashes from her azure veins
 And gem-like vision: wild and flushed she turns,
 And meets the searching glance of that dark eye,
 That reads the secrets of Omnipotence.
 Proud as the mountains that surround his home,
 As their far heights inscrutable, and deep
 As the cold waters of their fathomless lake,
 The prophet of Geneva stands; the man
 Who crushed a pontiff with a pontiff's hate;
 Watching the working of his wondrous spell.

XXIV.

"Her long locks bursting from their modest fillet,
 No more a barrier to her swelling veins;
 Her dark eyes glittering with a meteor's blaze;
 And her distended nostril like a steed's
 That pants for war, and paws the sluggish earth;
 Wild as a Mænad, from her studious seat
 OPINION sprang, and called me with a voice,
 The fearful shrieking of the raging storm.
 'It hath gone forth, a Judgment hath gone forth,

And Earth respondeth to the righteous doom :
The throne, the sceptre, and the kingly orb
Are as the shells upon the silent shore,
That none regardeth. Ay! in vain, in vain
Ye muster all your hosts, ye crowned things,
That seem to threat me in the vacant air,
And press imperial fingers to your lips.
In spite of all your dungeons, I will speak
Until the world re-echo with my voice!
In vain, in vain, ye threaten! Pharaoh's doom
Shall cool those chariot-wheels now hot with blood;
And blessed be the hand that dares to wave
The regicidal steel that shall redeem
A nation's sorrow with a tyrant's blood!

XXV.

“It hath gone forth, a Judgment hath gone forth,
And Earth respondeth to the righteous doom!
Time-honoured LYRIDON, for many an age
Of my great parents' fate the friend devote,
Prepare for mighty deeds and mightier hopes.
I scent the fragrance of the rising morn,
I feel the ardour of the breaking beam!
The strife, the carnage, and the consternation,
Kings' broken faith, and nations' broken hopes,
And the long struggle with deceitful Power;
When Tyranny, upon her threatened cliff,
Shall deem the casual ebbing of the tide
The sure subsiding of the wearing wave;
And Superstition, from the steeple top,
Mark the wind's lull, and with her credulous soul
Believe the storm is past, that shall ere morn
Shiver to dust her gorgeous pinnacles.
All this before me is; enough to wither
The heart of nations; and to make all men,
Crowned and discrowned, deceivers and deceived,
The slave and his oppressor, bow their heads,
And die of sheer decrepitude of soul
To bear their coming burthens. But I feel,

I feel my immortality, and never
 Will I relax in this great enterprise,
 Until the Sun shall rise upon a race
 Who bless his birth, and not be hailed with curses
 From those who deem his radiant light is born
 But to illumine Labour; when indeed,
 Man shall in truth be social; and his life
 A life of freedom, duty, joy, and love!'

XXVI.

"She ceased; and as she ceased, she threw her form
 Upon my breast with gentle violence;
 Her long bright locks, a sea of waving gold,
 Shrouding the lustre of her ivory neck;
 And as she clasped me with her trembling arms,
 Her palpitating lips, with still small voice,
 Breathed forth the panting purpose of her soul—
 'The corn is ripe, then hasten to the toil.'
 Whereat my arm around her graceful form
 Firmly I clasped, upon my faithful shoulder
 Her fair cheek resting, with her bright eyes closed;
 And in the liquid air my wings unfurling,
 Straightway I rose, and shot into the sky,
 Swift as the arrow some stout archer sends
 In wantonness of strength to pierce the heaven.
 And o'er the cloudy throne where Jura reigns,
 The mountain monarch of his ridgy realm,
 Gazing with sullen pride upon his fair
 And haughtier rival, she whose snowy crest,
 The rosy tribute of the sun receives
 What time o'er LEMAN'S breast of beauteous waters
 His evening hymn the grateful gnat begins;
 And o'er the spreading plains of fertile FRANCE,
 Vineyards, and winding streams, and golden fields,
 And orchards fresh and ruddy as the morn;
 Until the Low-lands o'er, where man maintains
 Audacious warfare with the astounded wave,
 I hovered; did I wing my mighty flight,
 Bearing my beauteous burthen; like the bird

The flashing messenger of amorous Jove,
 When from green Ida's secret mount he seized
 The Phrygian beauty from his frightened flock,
 And bore him breathless to the Olympian halls!

XXVII.

"The Tamers of the Waters, they who placed
 A haughtier limit to the haughty wave;
 Who seized wild Ocean by his wanton mane,
 And thrust a bridle in his foaming mouth:
 These were the fitting champions of the cause
 Of Truth and Freedom. Through their ancient towns,
 And the fair hamlets of their fertile meads,
 OPINION, with a glancing eye of light,
 Exulting ran; her hope-inspiring voice,
 Blithe as the gushing tone of Spring-born bird,
 That tells the snows are melting, and the frost
 No more maintains his iron tyranny.
 In vain the oppressors' legions, and in vain
 Old Priestcraft, in his pallid sanctuary,
 Mutters the curse that blights a future world.
 The steel of despot, and the bigot's fire,
 No more appal; in vain the siege, the slaughter,
 The kindling faggot, and the lying rack,
 Alva's fell rule, and Haerlem's ghastly doom.
 Heroic Nassau, with his shining blade,
 Leads on his martyred warriors to the fight
 That shall baptize regenerated man
 With Freedom's holiest life-drops. Glorious day!
 When Spain's dark infantry a darker doom
 Found on the plains their wanton pride had deemed
 The altar of their vengeance; and when he,
 Their conqueror, and of conquerors procreant sire,
 To me his vows of faith and freedom pledged
 In Utrecht's 'leaguered walls!

XXVIII.

"Upon the shore,
 Musing, I stood, as musing oft we stand,

After great deeds, and marvel at the power
 That now seems slack, and yet a little while
 Performed miracles. Exhaustion's dream
 And feeble reverie! And by my side,
 The beauteous maiden; on the solemn sea,
 And soft succession of its summer waves,
 Gazing serene. When lo! a cloud arose!
 It seemed no wind of heaven that cloud invoked.
 And as it rose, it parted; from its shade
 A shape appearing, solemn and superb.
 Female its mien, majestic yet; the form
 That with her lance Cecropia's votive earth
 Divinely struck, and from its fruitful breast
 The olive called, less awful and less fair!
 A golden helm her azure brow encircled,
 Her lucid arm a golden spear enclasped,
 And gently rested on a golden shield
 Her hand sinistral. O'er her graceful breast
 Flowed the rich purple of her Tyrian robe,
 Blazoned with waves of gold. 'Angelic chief,
 And thou fair daughter of all human hopes,
 OPINION young, yet mighty in thy youth.'
 Spoke thus the seaborne spirit; 'behold me here,
 The ruler of the waves—I welcome ye;
 A land awaits your coming with a thirst,
 As for some shady spring the hart may pant,
 After the savage chase, or for the breast
 The fainting infant yearn: a mighty land,
 Devoted to great deeds, the land I guard:
 Where man is pure and haughty as the cliffs
 That gird his island-home—a fitting shrine
 For Truth and Freedom. Dull and listless here,
 Then gaze no more upon these flowing waves;
 Soon shall they waft ye to a mightier scene,
 Than any yet the buskined pomp revealed
 Of antique theatres: judgment supreme,
 On those that place themselves above the seat
 Where Justice sits; and old Tyrannicides
 Shall deem their famous deeds but petty brawls
 When placed by your achievement.' Ceased the voice

Of great BRITANNIA ; vanished as it ceased,
Her glance imperial : but the resting cloud,
Resting, re-opens ; from its misty breast,
A gallant ship emerging ; fair its sails,
And proudly swelling with the new-born breeze ;
Bright in the sun its martial pennons stream,
And in the sky its dim and haughty shrouds
Blend with the azure cope, like that tall scale
The patriarch witnessed in his mystic dream
Angels descending. On the warlike deck,
That floating to our feet obedient glides, -
We bound, and bounding thus, the breeze becomes
A gale ; the bright and gently flowing waters
Swell into storm, and darken into night ;
And o'er the heaven distracted wildly dash
The sleet and scudding clouds ; swift flies the barque,
Groan its stout ribs, and creak the perilous yards ;
Our sight no more the hurrying land now cheers,
But through the raging tide we plough our way,
And fling the foam from off our conquering keel.
Yet ere the night on that wild scene descends,
And throws its sable mantle like a shroud
On one who dies with struggles, lulls the wind,
And through the murky air a single beam
Shoots its bright aim. Then o'er the horizon dark,
Uprising like a curtain spread the clouds,
And show the land ; a coast of glittering cliff,
Heroic ALBION !

XXIX.

“ Glory to the soil,
Where man first struck the proud oppressor down ;
Not like a jaded steed who, when o'er-spurred,
Flings off his burthen, even from despair
Becoming bold ; but as a noble being,
Who knows his rights, and knowing, dares maintain.
Majestic hour, when in the patriot woods,
Where HAMPDEN mused, the young OPINION sought
A welcome refuge in his ancient hall,

And gazed expectant on his pensive brow.
 Nor thine unwearied care, heroic PYM,
 Omit ; nor him whose high unbending soul
 His prison prouder than a palace made ;
 Passionate ELIOT, and his scathing voice.
 High priests who served in thy immortal shrine,
 Sublime EQUALITY ! What though their blood,
 And lavish brain fell like too early showers,
 Bearing a blossom fated to the frost ;
 What though too swift a spring of human hope
 These ardent sprites led on ; yet still the burst
 Proved that the sun could beam, the flowers could bloom ;
 Of clearer skies, and hours of odorous joy,
 A genial promise yielding.

XXX.

“ Not to thee,
 Child of my care, not to thy growing thought,
 For bitter is the bale of baffled hopes
 To ardent youth, since Youth indeed despairs
 Where Age remembers, and in memory’s spell
 Finds solace : as the sunbeam tints the cloud,
 Dark though its form, thus on the gloomy face
 Of sad Experience Hope will shed a smile.
 For me that sunbeam played ; but my fair charge
 Bowed down her head and languished. Sooth to say
 A dreary sight, heart-rending, when the priest
 And all his muttered rites were swept away,
 That man alone unto the maniac cry
 Of wild fanatic, should his willing ear,
 Bow with devout desire ; the right divine
 And lineal sceptre shivered but to thrust
 In some bold soldier’s grasp a bloody brand.
 But when the brainless people summoned back
 Their heartless monarchs with a sickening shout,
 As to its vomit some vile dog returns ;
 And Restoration and its juggling spells
 The moonstruck land enslaved ; a death-like trance
 Was fair OPINION’S doom, and in my arms
 Her senseless form I cherished.

XXXI.

“ As I gazed,
 With anxious eye upon the sacred shape
 On which all human hopes were staked, and watched
 As some fond parent may a fading child,
 When on the future corpse a sudden sleep
 Stilly descends, uncertain if the pause
 May be repose or death ; lo ! in the sky
 A bird appears, a bird of beauteous wing,
 Over the unknown sea its airy course
 Tracking with lusty plume ; within its beak
 An olive branch bedecked with fragrant bloom.
 Over our heads it soars, its graceful burthen
 Then gently dropping : on OPINION'S breast
 It fell, and as it touched her silent heart,
 Methought upon her cold and withered cheek
 A gentle flush arose, a rosy gleam,
 As when the sun seems set, a sudden flash
 Oft struggles with the twilight. Then I knew
 The gracious omen : herald of my course,
 Bearing OPINION on my faithful breast,
 The bird I followed with expanding wings,
 And left the worthless shore.

XXXII.

“ Ye Winds and Waters,
 All-potent ministers of Fate supreme,
 Ye have borne forward conquerors on their course,
 Fanning their haughty standards, soon to wave
 In lands remote : and Continents unknown
 Have by your influence to the prescient eye
 Of sages risen from their briny womb ;
 And many a hero, when his country's altars
 Beneath the oppressor's rod have wildly fallen,
 Hath to your fortunes cast his gods and children,
 And sought a holier fate and happier hearth.
 But never yet more sacred freight ye bore,
 Since first the Ark upon the growing waves
 Floated supreme, with all of human hope

Divinely charged, than when OPINION flying
 Over the broad Atlantic main, a home
 And refuge claimed, AMERICA, from thee !

XXXIII.

“ Region sublime ! where in a nobler mould
 All life is cast, save man, a fleeting race,
 Before their bold invaders, like a dream
 Before the breath of morn and rush of life,
 Quick fading. As it were a higher state
 For the choice spirits of a worn-out world,
 Thou risest from thy waters ! He who feels
 His soul is like thy mountains and thy streams,
 Pure and gigantic, claims thy willing soil
 His glorious guerdon. In thy mighty woods
 Hope lingers still, and when thy kingless shore
 Man daring presses with his sanguine foot,
 The fetters of the mind, more fatal far
 Than gyves tyrannic, like enchanted spells,
 Shiver and fall !

XXXIV.

“ Silent that procreant world,
 When on its hopeful visage first I gazed,
 As on a child that shall our daring hopes
 In season ripe fulfil. There was a spot,
 It seemed the cradle of some mighty deed,
 Tall mountains rose, with shining trees o’erspread,
 And cleft with falling rivers, with a sound
 Solemn, the solemn circus of the woods
 Filling, and flinging freshness on their boughs :
 A virgin growth, whose consecrated bark
 No axe had grazed, but on the unsullied turf
 For many a flowing age their fruit had fallen,
 Spoils of the squirrel or the fearless bird ;
 Or gentler banquet for some gentle fawn ;
 And in the centre rose a natural mound,
 Verdant and soft, with many a flower bedecked
 Beauteous and bright and strange. With pious care

Upon this fragrant couch I placed my charge,
 Her beaming eyes still closed, and still unmoved
 Her graceful form. Then plucking many flowers,
 Gently I dropped them on her breathless breast,
 And left her in her sacred solitude.

XXXV.

" Then through that wondrous land alone I roamed
 And watched its rising race. 'Tis here, methought,
 That I must triumph; in this nervous brood,
 Struggling with Nature, shall I find the souls
 That own no rule but her's. No wily priest
 Shall from his mystic grove with words enchain
 These quellers of the forest; no bold king
 The sacred rights of Labour here usurp.
 Man feels his stern equality when Want
 Is the intense instructor. Yet a while
 A fruitful harvest shall this teeming soil
 Indeed bring forth. And soon my prescient sense
 The agonising throes of Freedom's birth
 With throbbing heart marked well. It came at last
 The haughty tyrants of the olden world
 Watch with a jealous glance the proud display,
 Thy efforts yield emancipated Man!
 A blood-red flag their servile navies hoist,
 And soon their hireling legions tread the sod
 That gore had ne'er polluted. Shall we yield?
 Or conquering, shall some callous chieftain sheathe
 Within his country's heart the patriot sword,
 Too long intrusted to his fatal grasp?
 What! shall some second Cromwell dash the cup
 Of Freedom from a nation's eager lip?
 Oh, Lyridon! the agony has come
 Of all thy hopes! Not man be trusted now,
 When all the future trembles in the scale!

XXXVI.

" I said, and straight the form serene assumed
 Of stainless WASHINGTON. The unknown woods

Once more I thread ; within the secret grove,
 Where yet entranced, a hundred years reposed
 My precious charge, I stand ;—then on her front
 My lips I press, and whisper in her ear
 A hushed but potent spell. Whereat she rose,
 And gazed around her with a wild desire.
 ‘I come,’ she cried, ‘I come ; my blood is quick,
 And panting for the struggle.’ I could pour
 Tears of exulting joy but to recal
 That hour of holiest triumph. Where are now
 Your haughty legions, tyrants of the East?
 Where now your proud Armadas? Back we hurl
 Their threats contemptuous : to a briny grave
 Back beat their pallid plumes. Each stalwart arm
 That erst the oak encountered, quits awhile
 His rural warfare for a statelier field,
 And cleaves the oppressor with his patriot axe.
 And he who once the fisher’s peaceful toil
 Industrious urged, or bore to neighbouring ports
 The welcome produce of his native coast,
 A warrior now, upon the billowy main
 Undaunted bounds, and guides his armed prow
 Where hostile navies yield a nobler spoil,
 And claim a bolder venture.’

XXXVII.

“ He who watches
 The dying of the Storm will surely mark
 Within the turbid sky the mighty clouds,
 In shattered splendour sailing, like huge ships,
 After some fight that crowns an empire’s fate,
 Drifting by conquered shores ; while mid their wreck
 The cannon of the tempest sullen boom,
 The thunder’s fading peals ; now loud, now deep,
 Now near, now far away, until some bolt,
 Some single bolt, that seems to crack the sky,
 Tells that the strife is o’er. And then arises
 A gentle breeze, the scene distracted clearing,
 While, through a veil of soft distilling rain,

Like Triumph smiling through a shower of tears,
Forth shines the conquering sun ; on field and flower
His genial radiance shedding. Voice of birds
And lowing of glad kine that beam salute,
And soon each rural sound delightful tells,
Back to a freshened earth the rustic world
Return to grateful labour. I recal
Of the last gun the all-despairing moan,
That told that land was free ; that soon to Earth,
Like some high prophet to a panting world,
With voice resistless, and with marvellous deeds,
Freedom shall teach and publish ! Yes ! is past
That storm terrific ! Yes ! bursts forth that Sun
That ne'er shall set, the Sun of moral light !
Upon a mighty brotherhood of men,
Linked by a zealous interchange of good,
Shedding its glorious blaze.

XXXVIII.

“ Behold Man now
Lord of himself, that heritage of joy !
The reign of FORCE is past, dark-minded FORCE,
And FRAUD his subtle sister ; and their child,
The craven offspring of incestuous loves,
Pale, crouching FEAR, the equal light of heaven
Meeting with downcast eyes. Oh ! glorious Sun,
The beautiful thy beauty now illumines ;
No more thy splendour rises but to beam
On tramping bands of starving scatterlings,
The father and the mother and their woe
And bloody-footed brats, and babe on back,
The happiest of the tribe, since Nature sends
A milky meal for that poor envied imp.
But now, with front erect and gaze supreme,
His Maker man indeed resembles ; now
No more kind Earth a rigid step-dame seems,
But a most generous mother, glad to pour
The treasures of her breast to grateful hearts.
Famine, Disease, and Misery, and Care,

Have left this equal land : the rich man's curse,
 And harsh command, awake no echoes here.
 God is no more the only test of worth,
 But Labour hath its honour ; from the hive
 The drones are banished ; nobles, priests, and kings,
 Gorging the produce of a servile race,
 Servile and suffering : fainting as they feed
 The pampered few. Of ever pleasant life
 The means, and not the end, harsh Toil is owned.
 None tremble where none frown ; and none will fawn
 Where none can trample ; FLATTERY'S fatal brood
 Of pestilential falsehood wither here,
 Where POWER is VIRTUE ; e'en where POWER proclaims
 An equal share of good, the right of all ;
 Where never-dying HOPE and sweet AFFECTION,
 And SYMPATHY with all her smiles and tears,
 And TRUTH with his clear eye and clearer heart,
 Hover like spirits o'er the life of man ;
 And JUSTICE in his chambers ever stands,
 Swift-winged minister, to every woe
 Bearing his balm. And in the dimmer distance
 Of his great fate a glorious band I view,
 For these exalted sprites companions meet :
 There SCIENCE soareth with her starry crown ;
 There sounds the harp of golden POESY,
 And beauteous shapes the unshackled wit of man
 Calls into radiant life, as if to prove
 The inspiration of a soul divine ;
 And baffle Nature with immortal forms.
 There too are Sages with ensealed tomes,
 That Time shall yet uncloset ; deep truths are there ;
 Yet very false ; if Truth be what men deem,
 And pensioned priests promulge. There too is seen,
 Last in that radiant host yet brightest there,
 A form that should be WOMAN ; but methinks
 The slave hath lost her fetters. Frank, and pure
 From Custom's cursed taint, behold her now
 Indeed the light and blessing of all life ;
 The words of wisdom to those beauteous lips,
 Formed to make wisdom beautiful, no more

Denied; no more that soft and swelling bosom
 Shall stifle its emotions! But for ever
 Annulled the cowardly edict that proclaims
 WOMAN alone of all created things
 Must neither think nor feel!

XXXIX.

“Now oft as he,
 Who in his youth hath loved some maid denied,
 On his first idol, as his years advance,
 Doth muse and ponder; thus my brooding thoughts
 To thee and thy grey fortunes now return,
 Old EUROPE! Is thy shame indeed decreed
 And reckless misery? Is it thou alone,
 Grim mother of stout nations, that must mouthe
 The bitter bit for ever? Thou wert wont
 To show some spirit in thy juicy youth;
 I speak not of the dreams of ancient story,
 Though those indeed are fair. The race is dead
 That spawned heroic nations; yet hath risen
 In later times some solitary soul;
 As on dim nights a single star may teach
 There is a glorious heaven. Oh! GERMANY!
 Thine was ARMINIUS—can no forest cave
 Send forth his mate to strike the doting crowns
 That nod o’er thy oppression? Still resounds
 The lyre of MILTON. With a heartfelt pang,
 I turn from recreant ENGLAND, even to thee,
 Even to thee, ITALIA! Rise, RIENZI,
 From her quick soil, and drive away the beasts
 That den within her beauteous palaces!
 Lo! as I mused, there came a gallant band,
 A gallant band of gay and daring youths,
 Waving their blood-stained swords, with laurels crowned,
 And singing songs of triumph. Victors they
 In the great fight where I was conqueror!
 The shore they seek; for strangers were these youths,
 And having fleshed their voluntary blades
 In Freedom’s cause, a distant home they seek,

Where they may tell their triumphs. Glad they pay
 Their homage to OPINION, and myself
 To their fair soil invite a visitant.

XL.

"Illustrious GAUL! my footstep prints thy shore,
 Thou hope of craven Europe! As the flower
 Springs from the aloe's ancient breast of thorns,
 Thus mid the sorrows of a worn-out world,
 Thou risest with thy beauty: full of hope,
 And pride, and freshness! Many a poet's harp,
 The fairness of thy plains and fertile meads,
 Where maidens dance beneath the trembling shade
 Of trellised vines, have sung in strains as gay
 And joyous as thy grape. Nor she the least,
 The crowned victim, e'en for whom I weep,
 Who, as her scudding bark thy sunny shore
 Too swiftly left, within the briny waves
 Dropped tears as salt, and hailed with soft adieus
 The pleasant land of FRANCE! I hail thee now,
 Not for the wanton richness of thy soil,
 Not for the beauty of thy bright-eyed daughters,
 Glancing like fauns with never cloying charms,
 Not for thy sons' hereditary valour
 And airy grace; though since Athena fell,
 Wits more refined more plastic power ne'er wielded
 O'er an admiring world: but I do hail thee,
 That REASON in thy land hath found a dwelling,
 And built a glorious temple!

XLI.

"Welcome then,
 For such a stake, a struggle e'en as great!
 My rival stands before me. 'Tis the hour
 Omnipotence hath fixed with solemn truth
 Life's ill-apportioned lot to judge. From me
 Far be all fear! Eternal! thou hast heard
 The glossing tongue that proves so surely sweet
 The MANY labour, and the FEW enjoy.

'Imagination on her airy throne,'
 Indeed hath ruled to-day; no rival I
 For MAGROS in the cunning arts of speech.
 To make the worsè cause the best appear
 All know his power; and sooth indeed to say
 Great practice might he claim, if his indeed,
 The dexterous voice the Schoolmen's page inspired
 In the prime fortunes of his boasted scheme,
 High arbiters of truth, all recognised.
 If man be what I deem, what marvel then,
 In spite of MAGROS, he might sometimes shine
 In his unclouded lustre? One bright day
 Makes not eternal summer. Much he boasts
 His glorious ages, and his cycles choice
 Of noble action, by some despot's name,
 Or title of some able priest, baptized;
 As if the fortunes of a mighty race
 Must ever on some single brain depend.
 THE AGE OF HUMAN NATURE I proclaim!
 And oh! if Man indeed be what I deem,
 A being born for bliss; if to his God
 More gracious worship he can never bear
 Than by his own felicity to prove
 His great Creator's goodness; not in vain
 I stand before this throne; oh! not in vain
 Thus I appeal! thus call on thee, Eternal!
 To seal by thine omnipotence this hour
 His doom of JOY!"

XLII.

The voice of Hope is hushed,
 And o'er the radiant scene the shade of Night,
 If Night indeed it be that ne'er before
 Swept with its solemn train in those bright halls,
 Suddenly falls. A thousand blood-red stars
 Spring from the orb and gather like a crown
 Over its Power, then sounds again that Voice,
 The memory of which alone is dread.

THE DECREE OF DEMOGORGON.

'Dark is the sea of Fate and fathomless
 To human mariners its course profound;
 But what seems Chance to man or higher sprites,
 Is Truth refined to sheer Divinity.
 A twilight vision and a faded stream
 Are PAST and PRESENT to the shadowy ken
 Of dark creation, and their PRESENT breath
 A shifting mystery. But with us no PAST,
 No PRESENT; and what was, and is to be,
 And the swift passage of the rapid hour
 Are as the colours of this trembling arch,
 Blended and beautiful! Spirits supreme!
 In Man alone the fate of Man is placed.
 Lo! where the piny mountains proudly rise
 From the blue bosom of the midland sea,
 A standard waves, and he who grasps its staff,
 Nor King, nor deputy of Kings is he,
 Yet greater than all Kings. Unknown indeed,
 Like some immortal thing he walks the earth,
 That soon shall tremble at his tread. This Man
 SPIRITS then seek, for unto him are given
 Fortunes unproved by human life before!"

END OF BOOK THE SECOND.

I.

'Tis Night ; on MONTENOTTE'S gory hill
 The silver moon her summer radiance sheds,
 And throws a quivering light on many a sign
 That tells the bloody past ; standards and arms,
 Shattered and shivered like the ghastly forms
 That shared their pride, their terror, and their doom.
 The steed and steedsman both o'erthrown, and joined
 In death as life : that nostril which the morn
 Saluted with a snort more awful far
 Than fifty clarions, and its foam superb
 Flung on the heady fight, no more resounds
 That peal triumphant ; and that fiery crest,
 That tossed and sparkled in the daring air,
 Upon the cold and humble earth now lies
 Pallid and stiff ; and many a goodly man
 Who, as he vaulted on that bounding back,
 Felt that a saddle and a whirling sabre
 To softer seats and loftier arms might lead,
 And from the pillage of a startled world
 A throne and sceptre for his booty seize ;
 With all the passions on his sealed face,
 Now bites the dust he hardly deigned to tread,
 Bloody and grim.

II.

The breeze hath died away ;
 No sound disturbs, for silent as the slain,
 The slumbering victors in their tents repose,
 Studding with snowy spots the purple plain.
 No sound disturbs, yet on that silent scene,
 Ere the proud sun within the midland wave
 His glory veiled, fierce as his noonday beams
 The passions of two mighty hosts poured forth
 Their martial clamour : shrill cicala now

Chirps where the trumpet thundered, and the pines
 Erst blasted by the red artillery,
 Upon their scorched and ragged scalps now plays
 The shifting radiance of the southern fly.
 But mid his desolation man is still :
 Save the deep challenge of the watchful guard ;
 And snake-like rustle that too surely tells
 The midnight plunderer at his fell intent.

III.

Deep is the slumber of the sleeping babe,
 Upon the undrawn curtain of whose brain
 No phantoms flit ; deep is the huntsman's dream ;
 The sailor, in his giddy hammock slung,
 Rocked by the ocean, revels in repose
 The couch of Kings may envy ; and the star,
 The trembling star, that from the sunset springs,
 And bids the homeward wain its course retrace,
 The peasant for his honest toil rewards
 With rest, that Chanticleer alone shall rouse ;
 But sleeping babe, and huntsman with his dreams,
 The careless sailor, and the wearied hind,
 Know not the trance of slumber that descends
 Upon the soldier's brain, when like a ball
 In battle spent, or steed whose course is run,
 The sanguine struggle and the fierce suspense
 All past, and wearied by the hot pursuit,
 Whose scent is human blood, upon the sod
 His sabre and himself he wildly flings.

IV.

But there is one within an armed host,
 O'er whose pavilion with her brooding plumes
 Sleep rarely hovers, on his watchful brow
 No dreamy blossoms dropping ; various Life,
 With all its fortunes, cannot yield a lot
 Anxiety more surely seals her own,
 Than his the leader of the doubtful war.
 And that triumphant flag, whose triple tint

Led on the conquerors of the Appenine,
Exulting on her broad and piny crest,
As on the golden plains that spread below
They gazed, the land of promise in their sight ;
And felt the freshness of the silver streams
That wound amid their richness ; rapid PO,
A war and not a tribute to the wave,
Pouring with pride ; TANARO'S breast of waters ;
And DORIA, that the freeborn Alps send forth
Their envoy to a King ; that flag triumphant
Belongs to one, a hero, and a youth,
The moving light in whose pavilion tells,
The victory gained, the victor in his tent
To wearied nature spares no hour of rest, .
And scorns the solace of his feebler race,
O'er future triumphs musing.

V.

Suddenly

The curtains of the conquering tent withdrawn,
Reveal the hero bending on his knee,
And pressing to his lips the sacred robe,
A radiant form envelopes. Gorgeous light,
Such as the twilight yields, what time the Sun,
In Indian ocean or in Grecian sea,
Bathes his red car, the inner tent illumes ;
Of an immortal shape the glorious shade ;
For there, upon his front sublime, a smile
Divine, divinely playing, as befits
The brow of Gods, e'en in their joy serene,
Celestial LYRIDON the faith receives
And plighted troth of that predestined Man,
Upon whose crest the fortunes of the world
Shall hover. On the kneeling form that never
Before had knelt, and ne'er shall kneel again,
The Genius pours his spirit ; waving then
His mighty wings within the azure air,
He shoots his glittering course, like some wild light
That breaks the order of the midnight sky—

The meteor of a moment. Hushed and grave,
 With folded arms and brow profound with thought,
 The chieftain gazes on the starry heaven,
 Till in the distant air the radiant shape
 Becomes a dusky shade, the dusky shade,
 A spot that vanishes. Upon the earth
 His sight then dropping, pensive there remained
 Its future Lord : then glancing round, that voice,
 Before whose tones the kingdoms of the earth
 Shall soon grow pale, and trembling sceptres shiver,
 Broke on the stillness of the silent night.

VI.

"A BRIDEGROOM OF THREE DAYS, I have come forth
 From Passion's rosy couch and wild embrace,
 To plant my standard in the sunny land
 My fathers loved : the dream hath come to pass,
 The shadowy fate whose brooding vision haunted,
 Within the lonely grot, my lonelier hours,
 When in my uncle's garden, mid the shade
 Of summer trees reclining, like my thoughts
 As ardent and as wild, the musing day
 Hath often vanished, till the ruby sun,
 Smiling like some heroic chief within
 His gorgeous sepulchre, the glowing wave,
 Roused me from dreams as crimson as his orb,
 And then I felt I was a wretched boy,
 A miserable imp, and bitter curses
 Poured on my dreams of conquest, and the brain,
 The juggling brain that thus entranced my life
 With witching thoughts, then feeble, cold, and dull,
 Left me like one upon a barren heath,
 When fairies fly. The dream hath come to pass :
 ITALIA, I behold thee ! on thy beauty,
 As on a mistress oft denied I gaze,
 When waking in the sweet and stilly night,
 Within our arms we find the long-loved form.
 Thus I embrace thee ; thus, ye mighty mountains,
 And golden plains and lakes of glittering light,

Fair cities, whose traditionary towers
 Fill me with emulous fancies, thus I greet ye !
 I hail your inspiration with a mind
 That pants to mate your glory. Yes ! I feel
 I have a Roman soul, and I will find
 A Roman fate.

VII.

“ ’Tis strange how very calm,
 Yet breathing with the mighty enterprise
 That gives a colour to my future fate,
 The deed so long desired, so long denied,
 My FIRST OF VICTORIES : strange it is how calm
 Flows the still current of that eager blood,
 That in old days, in Brienne’s cloistered shade,
 So oft hath fevered o’er victorious dreams,
 And started at the visionary trump
 No ear but mine hath caught. Oh, MONTENOTTE,
 Within the midnight sky thy piny peak
 Raises its ancient crest. The birth of time,
 In thy chaotic crag perchance hath found
 A hoary witness ; yet although thy form
 Hath frowned eternal on the race of man,
 It is the throbbing deed of this dread day
 Shall make thy name a household argument,
 Familiar with their voices. For this day
 Hast thou baptized one a conqueror,
 Whose course shall be the universal swell
 Of the old waters, when divinely rising,
 They swept the landmarks from the startled earth,
 And thy proud height sank to an unseen rock
 Beneath their growing waves !

“ Dread Deity !
 In whose dark shrine, a gloomy votary,
 Worshipped my mystic youth ; dread Deity,
 Whom gods as men obey, thy spirit fills me :
 Eternal DESTINY ! I am thy child !
 The world is pregnant with a novel birth
 Of thought and action ; all is new and changed ;

Time hath no moral now to point a tale ;
 Experience hath no wisdom. Kings and Nations
 Gaze on each other with a blended glance
 Of awe and doubt ; the crumbling oracles
 Of old belief send forth a faltering sound
 That echo will not honour ; mid the hush
 Of the o'er-brooding elements, I stand
 Alone serene ; all-prescient that the bolt
 The storm sends forth, this red right hand shall grasp ! ”

VIII.

Meantime, while thus the youthful hero mused,
 In Milan's towers and Turin's courtly halls,
 Pale councillors and panting couriers tell
 The reign of Panic. Who this wondrous youth,
 Before whose glance the captains of the world,
 Grey with the wisdom of a hundred fights
 Tremble and baffled, fly ? Ye shades of TILLY,
 And mighty WALSTEIN, granite-hearted DAUN,
 And LAUDOHN, darting like the forked flash,
 That from its gloomy breast the storm sends forth,
 As quick, as fatal : your imperial legions,
 Lords of the DANUBE, that all-famous river,
 Whose shores are kingdoms, on whose warlike towns
 Your twin-born eagles float,—are they divorced
 From their old valiance ? Hath their southern captive
 A fatal harlot proved, in whose warm arms,
 Their rigid nerves dissolve ? AUSTRIA ! where now
 That famous infantry, whose ordered tramp,
 Like distant thunder, on the trembling ear
 Of their opponents fell ? BOHEMIA'S bands—
 Is all their glory but a minstrel's tale ?
 Has the HUNGARIAN sabre lost its edge ?
 The rifle of the TYROL, is it false ?
 Those clouds of cavalry, CROATIA sends,
 Her tribute to the tempest of the war,
 Are those steeds hamstrung ? And the lightning flashes
 Of those quick sabres, can they blast no more ?

IX.

Within that beauteous city, of the realm
 That from the mountain's base its title takes,
 The brilliant capital; the beauteous city
 Where MONTE VISO in the clear blue sky
 Its glaciers rears, and throws a haughty glance
 Upon the opposing height that bears aloft
 SUPERGA'S columned dome,—for there we see
 Nature and Art in glorious rivalry,—
 The royal Amadeus in his halls
 Reclined disquieted: alone and sad,
 The chamber oft with troubled step he paced,
 Upon the marble floor his thoughtful brow
 Fixed with vague glance: the monarch oft regains
 The restless couch, that neither rest, nor ease,
 Yields to his fevered frame: his visage pale,
 Though a slight hectic on his withered cheek,
 Offspring of Pride and Shame, with quivering light,
 Plays like a meteor on a dreary waste.
 Again he seats himself, and leans his head
 Upon his trembling hand, and looks around
 Upon the heroes of his house. A tear
 Starts from his eye, as in the shadowy light
 Of the young moon the royal warriors seem
 To frown upon their fated progeny,
 Revealing all the blood and all the craft,
 The subtle councils, and victorious fields,
 By which their power was raised, and they became
 "The Gaolers of the Alps," a style more precious
 Than Savoy's Duchy or Sardinia's crown,
 Or those romantic realms whose appanage
 More fame than tribute to their treasury yield,
 The rosy Cyprus and the sacred towers
 Of far Jerusalem!

X.

A cloud obscures
 The streaming moonlight: through the spacious hall
 A murmur runs, and o'er the palace roof

A single peal of thunder, than a storm
 More terrible, resounds. A crimson flash
 Illumes the oriel. Quick the monarch starts
 From off his musing seat : his eye aghast
 A mighty form perceives, in armour clad ;
 For those gigantic rebels fit co-mate,
 Who in old days defied the thunder-bolt,
 And made Jove tremble on his ivory throne.
 "Art thou some monk," the awful voice exclaimed,
 "On whose bald brow some spiteful chance has set
 A Kingly crown—that thus thou slumberest here,
 While thy pale legions fly before a flag
 Whose motto is the doom of all thy race?
 Is thine the blood of SAVOY, and art thou
 Of that heroic house, whose subtle word
 The eager victor in his midway course
 So oft hath checked,—art thou indeed the son?
 Arise! there cometh one, whose boast superb
 Binds Kings with chains, and with an iron band
 Fetters their nobles : yet a little while,—
 The time thou givest to a courtly dance,
 Or regal chase, thy golden bugle sounding
 Amid the dewy vistas of thy parks,—
 And this proud pile may own another lord,
 If, sooth to say, the People condescend
 To hold their wassail in thy fathers' halls.
 Yet there is time ; while MAGROS wields this lance
 All is not lost. From Milan's towers I come
 To bear thee hope and counsel. Ere the dawn
 Break on that gardened lake whose terraced isles
 And azure waters Borromeo's saint
 Serenely guards, from out the city gates
 The Imperial host advance ; thy equal power
 Join with these warriors, and thus joined, the foe
 Twice ye outnumber. Crush him on the plains
 He comes to rifle."

From the silver moon
 Vanished the cloud, vanished the martial form
 On which its beam might rest, for nought is seen :
 Nought seen, nought heard. But in the spacious hall

Around the ancient banners seem to stir ;
 And seem to smile upon the breathing walls
 The armed forms. Their bold inspiring glance
 A mirror finds in their descendant's face ;
 And as with prouder pace he plants his foot,
 He waves his arm, as if he too could conquer !

XI.

But not in vain had LYRIDON descended
 With heavenly counsel to the zealous ear
 Of Gallia's chief. For ere the morning beam
 Had tipped with sunlight all the mountain tops,
 The conqueror's march commenced, a march indeed
 As wondrous as his war ! Ye royal bands,
 Hirelings of kings and emperors, vain your strife
 With these bold sons of freedom, as the note
 Of glory's trumpet on the distant wind
 Catches their eager ear. On with the march !
 No pause but combat, and the victor field
 Their only resting place : the cause his own
 Devoutly feels each warlike citizen.
 For slaves be food and rest, their own great hearts
 Alone sustain them ; and their aching eyes
 Are weary only with the restless ken
 That seeks the unseen foe. A warlike march
 Warriors alone may form. No suttlng crowd
 Impede their noble course with all the lures
 That tempt the victim to the heartless strife.
 Each steed its forage, on his bayonet's point
 His scanty ration each bold soldier bears ;
 And trusting to his own good sword alone,
 Within a hostile land adventurous flings
 His reckless form. On with the ceaseless march !
 The startled warder, on his warlike tower,
 Guards well the gates the foe disdains to view ;
 Passing contemptuous by those mighty walls,
 Whose awful turrets many a summer host
 Of proud invaders, prouder held at bay ;
 And stopped the tide of war, like some vast mole

Breaking the Ocean's swell ; its headlong wave
 Back hurling with disdain—the bulwark of the land !
 But covered fort, and towering citadel,
 Are for these novel warriors, but the guides
 That trace their road of conquest ; urging on
 Their course resistless, till the rising towers
 Denote the regal city of the land,
 All meaner prey despising. This their aim,
 Their object this, no idle fence of arms,
 Maiming some feeble member with a scratch,
 But in its very heart to stab the land,
 And so end all. On with the ceaseless march !
 The billowy rushing of the winding river,
 Than which a nobler muniment to realms,
 Nature or art ne'er gave ; for these bold men
 Is but a bath to renovate their strength,
 And slake the fever of their heated frames.
 Wild in the wave they rush with eager glee,
 Flouncing and shouting in the troubled waters,
 And tossing in the air the glittering drops ;
 Or gay amid their travail, ever gay,
 Dash in each other's face the sparkling shower.
 On with the ceaseless march ! Short respite grants
 Their ardent chief ; the fisher's bark affords
 A ferry to the footmen, or they twine
 With practised skill light baskets, that the girls
 Crowned with fresh fruit, the fig and purple vine,
 Or rosy peach, that loves the radiant plain,
 Almond of glittering light, or grateful gourd,
 To morning market bear with jocund song :
 Into a lighter bark these baskets light
 The warriors twine ; nor Cupid when he floats,
 On some slight flower down his Indian stream,
 More fragile craft commands, than that which bears
 These haughty foemen to the awful War !

XII.

Set the red Sun, the silver Moon upsprang,
 And morn again its rosy radiance shed

Upon the purple mountains; o'er the plain
 The sun-beam steals, and o'er the gloomy woods,
 And into light the dusky rivers glide.
 Then rose the song of birds from sunny trees,
 Their leaves all quivering in the gentle air,
 The primal breathing of the waking World;
 Fair is the Dawn, right fair, and full of Hope,
 Though crimson Eve is Memory's gorgeous dower;
 Fair is the Dawn, and poets love its breath;
 But can its sun-beam on a fairer scene
 Than thine, *ITALIA*, rest, when on the hill
 The hooded convent crowns, it brightly falls,
 Flanked by a single tree, the sea-born pine;
 Or sparkling village with its tall thin tower
 Mid orchards bowered, and fields of Indian grain,
 With vines enclosed and ploughed by milk white steers,
 Calls into lucid life?

XIII.

The grateful breeze
 Upon the warriors falls; and while they hope
 The setting sun their victory may gild,
 Some trusty scouts arrive and seek their chief.
SARDINIA'S power, they tell, last eve had left
 The regal walls; to join the Austrian host
 Their aim: now resting from their nightly march,
 Beneath *MONDOVI'S* walls encamped. 'Tis well!
 His charger mounting, in his grey capote,
 A sight that ever cheers, all simply wrapped,
 The halting ranks the youthful hero greets.
 "My children," said the voice, that like a trump
 Their blood enkindled, and their glistening eyes
 Already read his purpose, "One brief hour,
 One breathing hour, is all that freemen ask.
 After their nightly march these warriors *rest*.
 You see the blood that flows within their veins?
 A laggard stream, methinks, yet shall it flow
 Swifter than all the streams they could not guard.
TURIN is ours; ay! from his hoary throne

We hurl the despot. I have nought to say
 But ye are FRENCHMEN. Victory to you
 As natural is, as to the glorious Sun
 His radiant light. Yes! ere the day shall die,
 We'll do a deed shall make all PARIS shout
 With our achievement; not a man who fights
 In our Italian armies but shall rank
 With the prime heroes of the wondering world;
 Sons of my heart, let each bold bosom feel
 The great Republic deems each man her child."

XIV.

He ceased: a shout the azure heaven ascended
 That roused the wild birds from their mountain lair,
 And o'er his head two mighty eagles soaring,
 Hovered with balanced plumes: the glorious omen
 A simultaneous chorus from their lips
 Heroic called, "The great Republic live!"
 This their dread cry, "On to the heady charge!
 No rest but triumph." At their eager words
 He waved his glittering sword, and with a smile
 That promised victory, to the dangerous van
 Galloped his steed superb, whose scornful crest
 Knew well its rider. Quick the trumpets sound,
 The banners wave; two columns from the host
 Pour forth their pride. MASSENA one, the next,
 SERRURIER heads, and from a gentle height
 Upon MONDOVI'S plain the torrents pour.
 Strongly entrenched, Sardinia's chief beats back
 SERRURIER'S force; whereat impetuous LANNES,
 For names that soon in these unrivalled wars,
 The soldier's blood like martial music stirred,
 As rising stars upon the horizon's edge
 Begin to glimmer, LANNES who knew not fear,
 His feathered hat upon his bloody sword
 All wildly waving, dashed aside the foe,
 And beat him back: meantime MASSENA turns,
 MASSENA, chief of Fortune and of War,
 The hostile flank. Is lordly TURIN lost?

One effort more! SARDINIA'S cavalry,
 Of all those famous ranks the pride and boast,
 Charge! on the mountain top the bursting lake
 That sweeps the rugged brow, and bears away
 Whole towns in its fell swoop, less awful far.
 The Gallic horsemen fly; their leader slain;
 STENGEL who, had he lived, perchance had waved
 A Marshal's staff, or from the ancient towers
 Of that strong town before whose walls he fell,
 A Duchy gained. The fate of War is changed;
 And MONTENOTTE'S conqueror with a glance
 Anxious, but firm, his routed rank surveys.

XV.

Now came there one upon an Arab steed,
 Smiling amid the fray, as if to him
 Danger was bliss, his reckless sabre waving,
 And mid the peril of the awful field
 Proud of his charger's paces. "Citizen!"
 He gaily cried, "the gladsome task be mine
 To rally these sad truants." Ere the nod
 Confirmed his wish, like some bright Paladin
 Charging amid a horde of Paynim Slaves,
 He dashed amid the victors: you have marked
 A band of urchins on the briny beach
 Pursue the wave receding with loud shouts
 And glee triumphant: but anon returns
 The crested fugitive with force renewed;
 How fly the urchins! how their lordly clamour
 To slavish cries and whimpering shrieks is changed!
 And thus before the self-appointed chief
 The bold Sardinians fly, as bright he whirls
 His flashing sabre, and his trampling steed
 Guides like an armed ship: shouting around
 With voice elate and laughing eye of glee,
 "Live the Republic, Death or Victory!"
 "Charge on, charge bravely, charge ye with MURAT!"

XVI.

Before his reckless onset all men yield ;
 His bright example nerves a thousand arms
 That Panic else had palsied. Yes, 'tis won ;
 A single blade hath turned the doubtful day ;
 Not doubtful now, within Sardinia's ranks
 Dismay triumphant reigns ; all fly, all yield,
 Scatter their arms upon the bloody plain,
 And fling their shattered colours in the trench
 Their slain hath filled. Their costly camp a prey
 Falls to their campless victors. All is lost ;
 The rout is perfect, and their royal chief
 Awaits the victor's mandate in the halls
 Filled with ancestral trophies. Bitter lot ;
 Kings have their pangs ; a conquered capital
 May break a royal heart !

XVII.

From out the gates
 From whence the tide of war so lately poured
 In pride chivalric, a far different band
 Issuing, the victor seek. A humble tribe
 Of downcast citizens with folded arms
 And sight depressed. Mercy they plaintive beg,
 The conqueror to their courtly halls invite,
 And the rich produce of their fertile plains
 Bear to his troops ; to suffer or enjoy
 Skilful alike. Light are your buoyant hearts
 Ye sons of FRANCE, alike in weal or woe
 Blithesome and gay, in peril or in pleasure
 Alike serene ! But not thy courtly halls
 TURIN superb ! thy costly galleries,
 Thy gardened ramparts and arcadian squares,
 And streets of palaces, thy victor stern
 Can tempt. Without the gates that are his own,
 Still on his charger seated, terms of peace
 He dictates :—such as to the vanquished yields
 The victor. To her often baffled foe
 SAVOY at best a servile satrap counts ;

With golden fetters, and a purple garb
 By sufferance styled a robe. Oh! for the day
 When from SUPERGA'S height the eagle eye
 Of bold EUGENE the Gallic leaguer marked
 His fathers' desperate city with their bands
 Triumphant pressing; then the mountain brow
 Descending like the storm, the foe surprised
 Swept from their trench, and beat them breathless back
 To pale-eyed PARIS! Ah! those days are fled
 "The GAOLERS OF THE ALPS" have lost their keys!
 TORTONA'S airy citadel, the fort
 Of iron CEVA, and the virgin towers
 Of CONI, whose Parthenic crest a flag
 Hostile ne'er sullied! Now the chief confirms
 The treaty merciless; then with a smile,
 That magic smile that made each warrior's heart
 As if his mistress glanced upon his form
 With passion tremble; with that magic smile
 Upon his ardent troops Napoleon turned.
 "PIEDMONT is ours: the great Republic thanks
 Her sons; but ere the breaking dawn shall gild
 VISO'S twin peaks—to MILAN be our march!"

XVIII.

Rouse AUSTRIA from thy trance! The old BEAULIEU
 Quakes in his tent. Rouse AUSTRIA from thy trance!
 One struggle yet for LOMBARDY, one charge
 To save the Iron Crown! The glorious city
 With all its fragrant gardens must it fall?
 And triply hundred churches, and its gates
 Through which thy CÆSARS passed for many an age
 Triumphant? Shame! oh! shame, oh! bitter shame!
 On thy imperial eagles. Yes! one more,
 One struggle more for LOMBARDY!

There is

An ancient city by a river's side,
 A rapid river broad and deep and blue,
 Amid the mountains rising, where the SWISS
 Still bow to ROME, the holy VALTELINE.

Thence flowing through the lake of palaces,
 COMO superb, that to its greater brother
 Is as the gem unto the precious stone
 Less rude, yet not more lustrous, bends its course
 Within the fertile MILANESE ; its wave
 A natural fortress to the beauteous land !
 And on its banks an ancient city rises,
 Old Gothic walls to which a wooden bridge
 Crossing the rushing stream securely leads,—
 The bridge of LODI !

Strange a day should make
 A place memorial, that for aye hath been
 Unnoticed or unknown ! Dread WATERLOO
 Was but a cornfield till the struggling hosts
 Upon whose crests the fortunes of the world
 Hovered supreme, their sanctifying gore
 Poured on its golden grain, and now we pause
 Upon its wide expanse and silent scene
 With spirit hushed and earnest, o'er the fate
 Of man profoundly pondering—but to feel
 We know not what we are, and ne'er shall dream !

XIX.

The bridge of LODI ! on this narrow bridge
 Is staked the fate of MILAN ! Here awaits
 As in his lair the hunted lion greets
 His headstrong foe, awaits the Austrian host
 The bold invader. The dread bridge across,
 Their awful mouths a park of mighty guns
 Distend, like some dark monsters that the eye
 Of poet only views, or he who mates
 The poet's art, veracious traveller !
 For surely not upon WALPURGIS night
 On the dim BROCKEN, or in spicy woods
 Of green CEYLON, more hideous forms are seen.
 The FRENCH appear ; the mighty cannon roar
 And shower fierce death. Upon this adverse bank
 The invaders point their guns ; a quick response
 Prepared to make. " BERTHIER," their chieftain cries,

"They leave us even bridges. Point the guns
 That none shall undermine the stepping-stone
 That leads to MILAN. 'Tis warm work my friend,
 But thus the world is won." A rumour runs
 That lower down the stream a ford is known.
 A troop of horsemen, at NAPOLEON'S word,
 Hither repair, and soon the waters breast ;
 Their leader leaving by the perilous bridge
 Watching the hostile ranks. Beneath the shade
 And friendly shelter of some shattered piles,
 His Grenadiers in column now he forms :
 A chosen band ; not one who does not feel
 The hour may come when his right arm may wave
 A chieftain's sword. What movement in the ranks
 Of AUSTRIA now their leader's eye perceives ?
 The GERMANS falter ; in their dangerous rear
 The Gallic cavalry have shown their crests.
 "The bridge of LODI leads to MILAN," cries
 Their dauntless chief, and at these words advance
 His columned host : they breast the fatal bridge ;
 But vain their effort : who can long withstand
 That dread artillery ? The grape shot falls
 In awful showers ; and from each armed house
 Pours thick the volleyed musketry : in vain
 Bold BERTHIER heads their fastly thinning ranks,
 And brave MASSENA waves his bloody brand !
 The FRENCH recoil. And loud the AUSTRIANS cheer
 In fearful triumph. "Yet once more ! my sons !
 Oh ! yet once more," the youthful hero cries ;
 And at these words the triply tinted flag
 He daring seized, and rushing on the bridge,
 The immortal standard planted. "I, at least,
 Die by my colours ! Death or victory !"

"Oh ! save the general !" every voice exclaims ;
 "Live the Republic !" Who shall now oppose
 That reckless onset ? Quick as one may fall,
 His desperate post a daring arm supplies.
 They charge ! and at the bayonet's bloody point
 Carry the guns ; within the rushing river
 Hurl their astounded guards, or stab the breast

That dares oppose the whirlwind of their course.
 On! on! the bridge is won, the bank is gained!
 Strike home, strike quick! Full many a wanton hour
 In Milan's halls and gardens shall repay
 For this dread moment. Panic-struck appear
 The sanguine Germans. But a moment since,
 Invincible they deemed their battered post;
 A flight and not a combat now it seems,
 None stop to struggle; even their aged chief,
 And many a laurel in the olden days
 Had crowned with fame Beaulieu's time-honoured head,
 Strives not to rally: to his rapid steed
 He trusts his fortunes, cursing as he flies
 The present age that conquers without rules.

XX.

It is the hour when lovers' hearts are soft,
 And voices softer still. On ADRIA'S wave
 Guitars and gondolas are busy now;
 And the fair city where the mountains shoot
 The turbid ARNO from their dark green womb,
 Re-echoes with the trembling mandolin.
 No sluggard in this sport of melody
 Thy wont to be, bright city of the plain,
 Light-hearted MILAN! But far different scene
 Thy busy squares and populous arcades
 Now offer to the moon that rising tips
 With silver light the statued pinnacles
 Of thy transcendant fane! High in the air,
 The noble army of thy saints and martyrs,
 High in the purple air their snowy forms
 Sublimely rise. Guard well, ye saintly sprites,
 Guard well the beauteous city of your care!
 For there are murmurs in the market place
 Of battles fought and won; and rumors rife
 That one now cometh on the conquering wind,
 The Lord of Vengeance, in his awful hand,
 The sword triumphant, and the terrible scales
 With which the victor metes resistless doom,

Waving supreme. An agitated throng
 Fills the great square, but silent in their fear,
 And deep suspense. With hushed and bated breath
 They whisper mutual dread ; and mutual hope.
 Speaks from some flashing eyes. Is this the hour
 Indeed of freedom ? The long promised hour
 By glorious bards foreseen and prophesied ?
 And shall *ITALIA* from her fatal trance
 This moment rouse, and burst the enchanted fetters
 Her fair voluptuous form so long have bound ?
 And many are the thoughts that none express ;
 And many are the hopes that all must feel ;
 Though ever and anon, as shrilly sounds
 The ultramontane trumpet, and the deep
 And gloomy beat of the barbarian drum
 Heralds their German masters ; to the pile
 Where the Imperial Viceroy holds his state
 And pallid councils, many a rancorous glance
 Speaks hope of vengeance. 'Tis in hours like these
 Heroic souls are proved, and all men own
 The magic of a leader. Never long
 A chief is wanting. *LYRIDON* descends,
 And mingles with the brooding multitude.
 But changed his form from that immortal hour,
 When first before the eternal throne he waved
 His radiant arm. The shape he now assumes
 Of young *VISCONTI*, in whose ancient veins
 Flows blood that never yet had deigned to mingle
 With other than thy daughters, dark-eyed land
 His fathers ruled ! At least, thy masters then,
 Italians, were thy countrymen !

XXI.

Aloft,
 Upon an ancient tomb he boldly springs,
 And all eyes meet his glance. "Must then for ever
 The accursed boar within our vineyard riot ?"
 He loud exclaims. "Must we for ever sow,
 Others to reap ? And our *ITALIA*, then,

In all her beauty but a harlot's dower,
 To tempt the brutal dalliance of some stranger,
 And then be stricken by the very hand
 That wantoned with her bosom? all our doom
 To be enjoyed and spurned. Is this the city
 The bulwark of old ROME against the GOTHs?
 Are these the ancient walls before whose breast
 The Consuls slew the CIMBRI? Who are these
 That meet with better fortune than their sires,
 And revel in our gardens and our halls?
 Are their hearts stouter? Stronger are their arms?
 Or are we changed indeed? I feel not so:
 At least you look like warriors. But the will
 Alone is wanting. Ripe and full methinks
 The season now. Before the invaders' flag,
 That bears a legend fatal to their race,
 Our tyrants tremble. Let it not be said
 To strangers, e'en tho' free, we freedom owed;
 But work your own salvation. I at least
 No quarter seek, or yield. But here aloud,
 And in their legions' very teeth, I pour
 My curse! as strong and bitter as their rule.
 By all the memory of our fathers' glory;
 By all the passion of their sons' disgrace;
 By all the beauty of our native earth;
 By all the hideous forms that in our bowers
 Have made their foul and sacrilegious dens,
 A curse upon the GERMANS!"

XXII.

Quick arise
 A thousand shouts, the echo of the curse.
 "A curse upon the Germans!" every heart
 And every tongue responds. With maddened rage
 They rise and wave their imprecating arms;
 And many a poniard glitters in the air.
 "A curse upon the Germans!" Louder still
 The execrating peal. "To arms! to arms!
 ITALIA wakes! Tear down the bastard eagles!

On to the palace!" As it were like snow
 A shower of triply tinted favours falls
 On crests the freeborn badge prepared to wear.
 "On to the Palace!" With this awful shout
 The infuriate crowd rush on. In vain their arms
 The Imperial guards oppose, and form a square
 Around the royal dwelling. Parley now
 The Austrians beg: a safe retreat their aim
 And only hope. 'Tis granted with contempt!
 And strange to mark how silent now becomes
 That clamorous multitude. Each ready arm
 Prepared to strike, or in the gathering night
 Grasping a desperate torch. With hollow sound
 Unclose the palace gates, and now reveal
 The ready chariots of the trembling Court.
 Shedding some natural tears, ere yet they quit
 Their princely halls, with mournful mien advance
 The royal pair, and mount their exiled cars.
 A moment since, not one among that throng
 But trembled at their glance; a moment since
 The fugitives were kings; and gazed with pride
 On their ancestral pile. The stranger now
 Shall revel in their seats, and favoured chambers,
 And stain their ancient home. A bitter pang
 Is his who quits the roof his fathers raised.
 With awe yet blending with their vengeful glance,
 The royal exiles and their scanty train
 The people watch. At length the city gate
 Closed on its recent masters. Then arose
 A shout like thunder—"ITALY IS FREE."

XXIII.

'Tis midnight; but the hour shall bring no rest
 To agitated MILAN. Through the streets
 The excited people swarm, and chant their hymns
 Of freedom and of triumph. Chime of bells,
 And peal of glad artillery, resound;
 From every steeple floats the free-born flag;
 With tapestry or stuff of various dye

Each house is decked ; and every garden stripped
 To twine to garlands. Every holy shrine
 Blazes with tapers ; while before the face
 Of sweet Madonna and her child divine
 The entranced votaries kneel in silent prayer.
 Hark ! to the tinkling of the mystic bell
 That calls the colour from each laughing eye ;
 Prostrate all fall upon the humble earth,
 Gazing with awe ; while, like a heavenly troop,
 Sweeps by the pious pomp of chanting priests,
 Waving their cross and banners in the air,
 Or holding relics to the blessed sight
 Of Ecstasy devout ! Lo ! farther on
 An arch of triumph rears its head superb ;
 Creation of a night ! While here are trained
 Bright companies of youths, and maidens fair,
 With songs victorious and with martial dance,
 The chief of GAUL to hail !

XXIV.

Methinks the dawn
 Is breaking o'er the Alps that gird the plain,
 And take their title from the ancient town,
 Where once assembled prelates dared decide
 What man can never fix : the TRENTINE ALPS.
 The dawn is breaking. Ere an hour may pass
 HE may be here. A solemn pause now falls
 Upon the doubtful city. Are they free
 But for a moment ? free alone to feel
 The double pang of servitude renewed ?
 A conqueror, or a saviour, who comes next ?
 Is the old lion scared to yield his den
 But to the wolf ? Yet vain their musings now ;
 The deed is done : and youth is full of hope,
 Though feeble men will shake their snowy crowns.
 And murmur of rash boyhood, and the lightness
 Of ancient rule extol ; paternal sway,
 Where man is ever treated as a child.

XXV.

He comes! he comes! the banners and the music,
 And the far-flashing of his armed train,
 Announce the heroic advent! Like a wave
 When the wind blows upon the adverse shore,
 Swift to the northern gate the people rush.
 He comes! he comes! A band of beauteous maidens,
 Waving light wreaths of laurel, strewing roses,
 In mazy dance, his martial course precedes;
 A troop of choral youth then next approach;
 The conquerors, then; in warlike columns ranged.
 They tramp beneath the gates in ordered march,
 And fill the city with their ranged files.
 He comes! he comes! amid the crashing peal
 Of bell and cannon, and the louder shouts,
 Upon his prancing steed NAPOLEON bursts
 Upon their awe-struck vision! Pale his face;
 Command not Triumph on his steadfast brow;
 Nor to their rapturous welcome does he yield
 The smile of sympathy; but holds his course
 As one who knows his power, and feels his right
 To be revered. Nor reins his steed superb
 Until before the palace gates he halts.
 Then, rising in his stirrups, waves his hand,
 And claims without a word a breathless pause.
 "ITALIANS!" said the deep and thrilling voice,
 "From this illustrious day have ceased to reign
 Your foul oppressors. FRANCE protects the free;
 And ye are FREEMEN!"

XXVI.

"ITALY is free!"
 The people shout, "Our ITALY is free!"
 "Long live NAPOLEON! Live, our mighty friend!
 Saviour of ITALY!" A thousand garlands
 Wave in the glorious air; a thousand flags
 Respond in triumph. But the conqueror yields
 No further presence to the raptured crowd,
 But seeks the chambers of their recent lords.

"Our ITALY is free, our glorious land
 Hath gained once more her ravished heritage!"
 Thus sings triumphant MILAN. "Shout aloud,
 Our dark-eyed daughters, and our valiant sons
 Raise your brave voices in our beauteous air,
 For ITALY is free! The rod is broken,
 The chains are burst, the oppressor overthrown!"
 Thus, with victorious chorus, do they march
 To where the ramparts yield a pleasing shade;
 What time the sun descends, and many a maiden
 Gazes with softness on the evening star;
 No play of love, no soft voluptuous sport,
 Their purpose now. But where its lofty head
 A lusty poplar raises, now they crowd.
 Fast to its trunk they fix the ready ropes;
 Advances then a band of nervous youth,
 And, singing as they toil, with daring grasp,
 Up by their roots the mighty branches drag;
 And on a car bedecked with laurels, bear
 Their vigorous burthen to the palace gates.
 With renovated life before those walls
 They plant their spoil, and then with deafening shouts,
 Tossing their caps within the giddy air,
 Dance round the tree of LOMBARD Liberty!

END OF BOOK THE THIRD.

THE
TRAGEDY
OF
Count Alarcos

By
The Author of "Vivian Grey"

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER
Great Marlborough Street

1839

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD FRANCIS EGERTON.

I DEDICATE to a poet an attempt to contribute to the revival of English Tragedy: a very hopeless labour, all will assure me.

When I commenced this drama there were certain indications which induced me to believe that the public taste was recurring to the representations of that stage which has afforded us so much of national delight, wisdom, and glory. These indications have already vanished; and one is almost tempted to admit the theory of those ingenious critics, who maintain that the English Drama has performed its office, and that, in the present state of civilization, it has no functions to fulfil.

The theory is a very plausible one; but what theory was ever true? And who can deny that a fine play, finely performed, is the noblest productions of art?

This age, denounced as anti-poetical, seems to me full of poetry, for it is full of passion.

But we are to live, for a moment, in other and distant times.

Do you remember the Ballad of "the Count Alarcos and the Infanta Solisa?"

An analysis of it may be found in Bouterwek's History of Spanish Literature; and it has been rendered into English with great spirit by Mr. Lockhart, and with admirable fidelity, both as regards the sense and the metre, by Dr. Bowring.

Years have flown away, since rambling in the Sierras of Andalusia, beneath the clear light of a Spanish moon, and freshened by the seabreeze that had wandered up a river from the coast, I first listened to the chaunt of that strange and terrible tale.

It seemed to me rife with all the materials of the tragic drama; and I planned, as I rode along, the scenes and characters of which it appeared to me susceptible.

That was the season of life when the heart is quick with emotion, and the brain with creative fire; when the eye is haunted with beautiful sights, and the ear with sweet sounds; when we live in reveries of magnificent performance, and the future seems only a perennial flow of poetic invention.

Dreams of fantastic youth! Amid the stern realities of existence I have unexpectedly achieved a long-lost purpose.

As there is no historical authority for the events of the Ballad, I have fixed upon the thirteenth century for the period of their occurrence. At that time the kingdom of Castille had recently obtained that supremacy in Spain which led, in a subsequent age, to the political integrity of the country. Burgos, its capital, was a magnificent city; and then also arose that master-piece of Christian architecture, its famous Cathedral.

This state of comparative refinement and civilization permitted the introduction of more complicated motives than the rude manners of the Ballad would have authorized; while the picturesque features of the Castilian middle ages still flourished in full force; the factions of a powerful nobility, renowned for their turbulence—strong passions, enormous crimes, profound superstition.

Whatever may be the fate of this work, I shall not regret its composition, since it affords me the opportunity of thus publicly paying a tribute to talents which all admire, and to kindness which I have personally experienced.

Δ.

London, May, 1839.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

The KING OF CASTILLE.

COUNT ALARCOS, a Prince of the Blood.

COUNT OF SIDONIA.

COUNT OF LEON.

PRIOR OF BURGOS.

ORAN, a Moor.

FERDINAND, a Page.

GUZMAN JACA, a Bravo.

GRAUS, the Keeper of a Posada.

SOLISA, the Infanta of Castille, only child of the King.

FLORIMONDE, Countess Alarcos.

FLIX, a Hostess.

Courtiers, Pages, Chamberlains, Bravos, and Priests.

Time—the 13th Century.

Scene—Burgos, the capital of Castille, and its vicinity

ERRATUM.

Dedication, page 4, line 3.

For "is the noblest productions of art," *read* "is among the noblest productions of art."

THE TRAGEDY
OF
COUNT ALARCOS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Street in Burgos ; the Cathedral in the distance.

Enter TWO COURTIER.

1st Cour. The Prince of Hungary dismissed?

2d Cour. Indeed

So runs the rumour.

1st Cour. Why, the spousal note
Still floats upon the air!

2d Cour. Myself this morn
Beheld the Infanta's entrance, as she threw,
Proud as some bitless barb, her haughty glance
On our assembled chiefs.

1st Cour. The Prince was there?

2d Cour. Most royally; nor seemed a man more fit
To claim a kingdom for a dower. He looked
Our Gadian Hercules, as the advancing peers
Their homage paid. I followed in the train
Of Count Alarcos, with whose ancient house
My fortunes long have mingled.

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- 1st Cour.* 'Tis the same,
But just returned?
- 2d Cour.* Long banished from the Court;
And only favoured since the Queen's decease,
His ancient foe.
- 1st Cour.* A very potent Lord?
- 2d Cour.* Near to the throne; too near perchance for peace.
You're young at Burgos, or indeed 'twere vain
To sing Alarcos' praise, the brightest knight
That ever waved a lance in Old Castille.
- 1st Cour.* You followed in his train?
- 2d Cour.* And as we passed,
Alarcos bowing to the lowest earth,
The Infanta swooned; and pale as yon niched saint,
From off the throned step, her seat of place,
Fell in a wild and senseless agony.
- 1st Cour.* Sancta Maria! and the King—
- 2d Cour.* Uprose
And bore her from her maidens, then broke up
The hurried Court; indeed I know no more;
For like a turning tide the crowd pressed on,
And scarcely could I gain the grateful air.
Yet on the Prado's walk came smiling by
The Bishop of Ossuna; as he passed
He clutched my cloak, and whispered in my ear,
"The match is off."

(Enter PAGE.)

- 1st Cour.* Hush! hush! a passenger.
- Page.* Most noble Cavaliers, I pray, inform me
Where the great Count Alarcos holds his quarter?
- 2d Cour.* In the chief square. His banner tells the roof;
Your pleasure with the Count, my gentle youth?
- Page.* I were a sorry messenger to tell
My mission to the first who asks its aim.
- 2d Cour.* The Count Alarcos is my friend and chief.
- Page.* Then better reason I should trusty be,
For you can be a witness to my trust.
- 1st Cour.* A forward youth!
- 2nd Cour.* A Page is ever pert.

Page. Ay! ever pert is youth that baffles age

[*Exit PAGE.*]

1st Cour. The Count is married?

2d Cour. To a beauteous lady;

And blessed with a fair race. A happy man

Indeed is Count Alarcos. [*A trumpet sounds.*]

1st Cour. Prithee, see;

Passes he now?

2d Cour. Long since. Yon banner tells

The Count Sidonia. Let us on, and view

The passage of his pomp. His Moorish steeds,

They say, are very choice.

[*Exeunt TWO COURTIER.*]

SCENE II.

A Chamber in the Palace of Alarcos. The COUNTESS seated and working at her tapestry; the COUNT pacing the Chamber.

Coun. You are disturbed, Alarcos?

Alar. 'Tis the stir

And tumult of this morn. I am not used

To Courts.

Coun. I know not why, it is a name,

That makes me tremble.

Alar. Tremble, Florimonde,

Why should you tremble?

Coun. Sooth I cannot say.

Methinks the Court but little suits my kind;

I love our quiet home.

Alar. This is our home.

Coun. When you are here.

Alar. I will be always here.

Coun. Thou can'st not, sweet Alarcos. Happy hours,

When we were parted but to hear thy horn

Sound in our native woods!

Alar. Why this is humour!

We're courtiers now; and we must smile and smirk.

Coun. Methinks your tongue is gayer than your glance.
The King, I hope, was gracious?

Alar. Were he not,

My frown's as prompt as his. He was most gracious.

Coun. Something has chafed thee?

Alar. What should chafe me, child?

And when should hearts be light, if mine be dull?

Is not mine exile over? Is it nought

To breathe in the same house where we were born,

And sleep where slept our fathers? Should that chafe?

Coun. Yet didst thou leave my side this very morn,

And with a vow this day should ever count

Amid thy life most happy; when we meet

Thy brow is clouded.

Alar. Joy is sometimes grave,

And deepest when 'tis calm. And I am joyful,

If it be joy, this long forbidden hall

Once more to pace, and feel each fearless step

Treads on a baffled foe.

Coun. Hast thou still foes?

Alar. I trust so; I should not be what I am,

Still less what I will be, if hate did not

Pursue me as my shadow. Ah! fair wife,

Thou knowest not Burgos. Thou hast yet to fathom

The depths of thy new world.

Coun. I do recoil

As from some unknown woe, from this same world.

I thought we came for peace.

Alar. Peace dwells within

No lordly roof in Burgos. We have come

For triumph.

Coun. So I share thy lot, Alarcos,

All feelings are the same.

Alar. My Florimonde,

I took thee from a fair and pleasant home

In a soft land, where, like the air they live in,

Men's hearts are mild. This proud and fierce Castille

Resembles not thy gentle Aquitaine,

More than the eagle may a dove, and yet

It is my country. Danger in its bounds

Weighs more than foreign safety. But why speak
Of what exists not?

Coun. And I hope may never!

Alar. And if it come, what then? This chance shall find me
Not unprepared.

Coun. But why should there be danger?
And why should'st thou, the foremost prince of Spain,
Fear or make foes? Thou standest in no light
Would fall on other shoulders; thou hast no height
To climb, and nought to gain. Thou art complete;
The King alone above thee, and thy friend?

Alar. So I would deem. I did not speak of fear.

Coun. Of danger?

Alar. That's delight, when it may lead
To mighty ends. Ah, Florimonde! thou art too pure;
Unsoiled in the rough and miry paths
Of this same trampling world; unskilled in heats
Of fierce and emulous spirits. There's a rapture
In the strife of factions, that a woman's soul
Can never reach. Men smiled on me to-day
Would gladly dig my grave; and yet I smiled,
And gave them coin as ready as their own,
And not less base.

Coun. And can there be such men,
And can'st thou live with them!

Alar. Ay! and they saw
Me ride this morning in my state again;
The people cried "Alarcos and Castille!"
The shout will dull their feasts.

Coun. There was a time
Thou didst look back as on a turbulent dream
On this same life.

Alar. I was an exile then.
This stirring Burgos has revived my vein.
Yea, as I glanced from off the Citadel
This very morn, and at my feet outspread
Its amphitheatre of solemn towers
And groves of golden pinnacles, and marked
Turrets of friends and foes; or traced the range,
Spread since my exile, of our city's walls

Washed by the swift Arlanzon : all around
 The flash of lances, blaze of banners, rush
 Of hurrying horsemen, and the haughty blast
 Of the soul-stirring trumpet,—I renounced
 My old philosophy, and gazed as gazes
 The falcon on his quarry!

Coun. Jesu grant
 The lure will bear no harm! [*A trumpet sounds.*]

Alar. Whose note is that?

I hear the tramp of horsemen in the court;

We have some guests.

Coun. Indeed!

Enter the COUNT of SIDONIA, and the COUNT of LEON.

Alar. My noble friends,
 My Countess greets ye!

Sido. And indeed we pay
 To her our homage.

Leon. Proud our city boasts
 So fair a presence.

Coun. Count Alarcos' friends
 Are ever welcome here.

Alar. No common wife,
 Who welcomes with a smile her husband's friends.

Sido. Indeed a treasure! When I marry, Count,
 I'll claim your counsel.

Coun. 'Tis not then your lot?

Sido. Not yet, sweet dame; tho' sooth to say, full often
 I dream such things may be.

Coun. Your friend is free?

Leon. And values freedom: with a rosy chain
 I still should feel a captive.

Sido. Noble Leon
 Is proof against the gentle passion, lady,
 And will ere long, my rapier for a gage,
 Marry a scold.

Leon. In Burgos now, methinks,
 Marriage is scarce the mode. Our princess frowns,
 It seems, upon her suitors.

Sido. Is it true

The match is off?

Leon. 'Tis said.

Coun. The match is off!

You did not tell me this strange news, Alarcos.

Sido. Did he not tell you how——

Alar. In truth, good Sirs,

My wife and I are somewhat strangers here,
And things that are of moment to the minds
That long have dwelt on them, to us are nought.

(*To the COUNTESS.*)

There was a sort of scene to-day at Court;
The Princess fainted—we were all dismissed,
Somewhat abruptly; but, in truth, I deem
These rumours have no source but in the tongues
Of curious idlers.

Sido. Faith, I hold them true.

Indeed they're very rife.

Leon. Poor man, methinks

His is a lot forlorn, at once to lose

A mistress and a crown!

Coun. Yet both may bring

Sorrow and cares. But little joy, I ween,

Dwells with a royal bride, too apt to claim

The homage she should yield.

Sido. I would all wives

Held with your Countess in this pleasing creed.

Alar. She has her way; it is a cunning wench

That knows to wheedle. Burgos still maintains

Its fame for noble fabrics. Since my time

The city's spread.

Sido. Ah! you're a traveller, Count.

And yet we have not lagged.

Coun. The Infanta, Sirs,

Was it a kind of swoon?

Alar. Old Lara lives

Still in his ancient quarter?

Leon. With the rats

That share his palace—You spoke, Madam?

Coun. She

Has dainty health perhaps?

Leon. All ladies have.

And yet as little of the fainting mood

As one could fix on——

Alar. Mendola left treasure?

Sido. Wedges of gold, a chamber of sequins

Sealed up for ages, flocks of Barbary sheep

Might ransom princes, tapestry so rare

The King straight purchased, covering for the price

Each piece with pistoles.

Coun. Is she very fair?

Leon. As future Queens must ever be, and yet

Her face might charm uncrowned.

Coun. It grieves me much

To hear the Prince departs. 'Tis not the first

Among her suitors?

Alar. Your good uncle lives——

Nunez de Leon?

Leon. To my cost, Alarcos;

He owes me much.

Sido. Some promises his heir

Would wish fulfilled.

Coun. In Gascony, they said,

Navarre had sought her hand.

Leon. He loitered here

But could not pluck the fruit: it was too high.

Sidonia threw him in a tilt one day.

The Infanta has her fancies; unhorsed knights

Count not among them.

Enter a CHAMBERLAIN who whispers COUNT ALARCOS.

Alar. Urgent, and me alone

Will commune with! A Page! Kind guests, your
pardon,

I'll find you here anon. My Florimonde,

Our friends will not desert you, like your spouse.

[*Exit* ALARCOS.]

Coun. My Lords, will see our gardens?

Sido. We are favoured.
 We wait upon your steps.
Leon. And feel that roses
 Will spring beneath them.
Coun. You're an adept, Sir,
 In our gay science.
Leon. Faith I stole it, Lady,
 From a loose Troubadour, Sidonia keeps
 To write his sonnets, *[Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE III.

A Chamber.

Enter ALARCOS and PAGE.

Page. Will you wait here, my Lord?
Alar. I will, Sir *Page.*
[Exit PAGE.
 The Bishop of Ossuna,—what would he?
 He scents the prosperous ever. Ay! they'll cluster
 Round this new hive. But I'll not house them yet.
 Marry, I know them all; but me they know,
 As mountains might the leaping stream that meets
 The ocean as a river. Time and exile
 Change our life's course, but is its flow less deep
 Because it is more calm? I've seen to-day
 Might stir its pools. What if my phantom flung
 A shade on their bright path? 'Tis closed to me
 Although the goal's a crown. She loved me once;
 Now swoons, and now the match is off. She's true:
 But I have clipped the heart that once could soar
 High as her own! Dreams, dreams! And yet entranced,
 Unto the fair phantasma that is fled,
 My struggling fancy clings; for there are hours
 When memory with her signet stamps the brain
 With an undying mint; and these were such,
 When high Ambition and enraptured Love,
 Twin Genii of my daring destiny,

Bore on my sweeping life with their full wing,
Like an angelic host :

[In the distance enter a lady veiled.]

Is this their priest?

Burgos unchanged I see.

[Advancing towards her.]

A needless veil

To one prophetic of thy charms, fair lady.

And yet they fall on an ungracious eye.

[Withdraws the veil.]

Solisa !

Sol. Yes ! Solisa ; once again.

O say Solisa ! let that long lost voice

Breathe with a name too faithful !

Alar. Oh ! what tones

What mazing sight is this ! The spell-bound forms

Of my first youth rise up from the abyss

Of opening time. I listen to a voice

That bursts the sepulchre of buried hope

Like an immortal trumpet.

Sol. Thou hast granted,

MARY, my prayers !

Alar. Solisa, my Solisa !

Sol. Thine, thine, Alarcos. But thou—whose art thou?

Alar. Within this chamber is my memory bound ;

I have no thought, no consciousness beyond

Its precious walls.

Sol. Thus did he look, thus speak,

When to my heart he clung, and I to him

Breathed my first love—and last.

Alar. Alas ! alas !

Woe to thy Mother, maiden.

Sol. She has found

That which I oft have prayed for.

Alar. But not found

A doom more dark than ours.

Sol. I sent for thee,

To tell thee why I sent for thee ; yet why,

Alas ! I know not. Was it but to look

Alone upon the face that once was mine ?

This morn it was so grave. O! was it woe
 Or but indifference, that inspired that brow
 That seemed so cold and stately? was it hate?
 O! tell me anything, but that to thee
 I am a thing of nothingness.

Alar. O spare!

Spare me such words of torture.

Sol. Could I feel.

Thou didst not hate me, that my image brought
 At least a gentle, if not tender thoughts,
 I'd be content. I cannot live to think,
 After the past, that we should meet again
 And change cold looks. We are not strangers, say
 At least we are not strangers?

Alar. Gentle Princess—

Sol. Call me Solisa; tho' we meet no more,
 Call me Solisa now.

Alar. Thy happiness—

Sol. O! no, no, no, not happiness, at least
 Not from those lips.

Alar. Indeed it is a name
 That ill becomes them.

Sol. Yet they say, thou'rt happy,
 And bright with all prosperity, and I
 Felt solace in that thought.

Alar. Prosperity!
 Men call them prosperous whom they deem enjoy
 That which they envy; but there's no success
 Save in one master wish fulfilled, and mine
 Is lost for ever.

Sol. Why was it? O, why
 Didst thou forget me?

Alar. Never, lady, never—
 But ah! the past, the irrevocable past—
 We can but meet to mourn.

Sol. No, not to mourn.
 I came to bless thee, came to tell thee
 I hoped that thou wert happy.

Alar. Come to mourn.
 I'll find delight in my unbridled grief:

Yes! let me fling away at last this mask,
And gaze upon my woe.

Sol. O, it was rash,
Indeed 'twas rash, Alarcos—what, sweet sir,
What, after all our vows, to hold me false,
And place this bar between us! I'll not think
Thou ever lovest me as thou didst profess,
And that's the bitter drop.

Alar. Indeed, indeed,—

Sol. I could bear much, I could bear all—but this.
My faith in thy past love, it was so deep,
So pure, so sacred, 'twas my only solace;
I fed upon it in my secret heart,
And now e'en that is gone.

Alar. Doubt not the past,
'Tis sanctified. It is the green fresh spot
In my life's desert.

Sol. There is none to thee
As I have been? Speak, speak, Alarcos, tell me
Is't true? Or, in this shipwreck of my soul,
Do I cling wildly to some perishing hope
That sinks like me?

Alar. The May-burst of the heart
Can bloom but once; and mine has fled, not faded.
That thought gave fancied solace—ah 'twas fancy,
For now I feel my doom.

Sol. Thou hast no doom
But what is splendid as thyself. Alas!
Weak woman, when she stakes her heart, must play
Ever a fatal chance. It is her all,
And when 'tis lost, she's bankrupt; but proud man
Shuffles the cards again, and wins to-morrow
What pays his present forfeit.

Alar. But alas!

What have I won?

Sol. A country and a wife.

Alar. A wife!

Sol. A wife, and very fair, they say.
She should be fair, who could induce thee break
Such vows as thine. O! I am very weak.

Why came I here? Was it indeed to see
If thou could'st look on me?

Alar. My own Solisa—

Sol. Call me not thine; why what am I to thee
That thou should'st call me thine?

Alar. Indeed, sweet lady,
Thou lookest on a man as bruised in spirit,
As broken-hearted, and subdued in soul,
As any breathing wretch that deems the day
Can bring no darker morrow. Pity me!
And if kind words may not subdue those lips
So scornful in their beauty, be they touched
At least by Mercy's accents! Was't a crime,
I could not dare believe that royal heart
Retained an exile's image? that forlorn,
Harassed, worn out, surrounded by strange aspects
And stranger manners, in those formal ties
Custom points out, I sought some refuge, found
At least companionship, and, grant 'twas weak,
Shrunk from the sharp endurance of the doom
That waits on exile—utter loneliness!

Sol. His utter loneliness!

Alar. And met thy name,
Most beauteous lady, prithee think of this,
Only to hear the princes of the world
Were thy hot suitors, and that one would soon
Be happier than Alarcos.

Sol. False, most false,
They told thee false.

Alar. At least, then, pity me,
Solisa!

Sol. Ah! Solisa—that sweet voice—
Why should I pity thee? 'Tis not my office.
Go, go to her that cheered thy loneliness,
Thy utter loneliness. And had I none?
Had I no pangs of solitude? Exile!
O! there were moments I'd have gladly given
My crown for banishment. A wounded heart
Beats freer in a desert; 'tis the air
Of palaces that chokes it.

Alar. Fate has crossed,
 Not falsehood, our sweet loves. Our lofty passion
 Is tainted with no vileness. Memory bears
 Convulsion, not contempt; no palling sting
 That waits on base affections. It is something
 To have loved thee; and in that thought I find
 My sense exalted; wretched though I be.

Sol. Is he so wretched? Yet he is less forlorn
 Than when he sought, what I would never seek,
 A partner in his woe? I'll ne'er believe it;
 Thou are not wretched. Why thou hast a friend,
 A sweet companion in thy grief to soothe
 Thy loneliness, and feed on thy bright smiles,
 Thrill with thine accents, with impassioned reverence
 Enclasp thine hand, and with enchained eyes
 Gaze on thy glorious presence. O, Alarcos!
 Art thou not worshipped now? What, can it be,
 That there is one, who walks in Paradise,
 Nor feels the air immortal?

Alar. Let my curse
 Descend upon the hour I left thy walls,
 My father's town!

Sol. My blessing on thy curse!
 Thou hast returned—thou hast returned, Alarcos?

Alar. To despair—

Sol. Yet 'tis not the hour he quitted
 Our city's walls, it is the tie that binds him
 Within those walls, my lips would more denounce—
 But ah, that tie is dear!

Alar. Accursed be
 The wiles that parted us; accursed be
 The ties that sever us!

Sol. Thou'rt mine.

Alar. For ever—

Thou unpolluted passion of my youth,
 My first, my only, my enduring love!

(*They embrace.*)

(*Enter FERDINAND the Page.*)

Fer. Lady, a message from thy royal father ;
He comes—

Sol. (*springing from the arms of Alarcos*)
My father! word of fear! Why now
To cloud my light? I had forgotten fate ;
But he recalls it. O my bright Alarcos!
My love must fly. Nay, not one word of care ;
Love only from those lips. Yet, ere we part,
Seal our sweet faith renewed.

Alar. And never broken.

[*Exit ALARCOS.*]

Sol. Why has he gone? Why did I bid him go?
And let this jewel I so daring plucked
Slip in the waves again? I'm sure there's time
To call him back, and say farewell once more.
I'll say farewell no more ; it was a word
Ever harsh music when the morrow brought
Welcomes renewed of love. No more farewells.
O when will he be mine! I cannot wait,
I cannot tarry, now I know he loves me ;
Each hour, each instant that I see him not,
Is usurpation of my right. O joy!
Am I the same Solisa, that this morn,
Breathed forth her orison with humbler spirit
Than the surrounding acolytes? Thou'st smiled,
Sweet Virgin, on my prayers. Twice fifty tapers
Shall burn before thy shrine. Guard over me
O! mother of my soul, and let me prosper
In my great enterprise! O hope! O love!
O sharp remembrance of long baffled joy!
Inspire me now!

SCENE IV.

The KING ; the INFANTA.

King. I see my daughter?

Sol. Sir, your duteous child.

King. Art thou indeed my child? I had some doubt
I was a father.

Sol. These are bitter words.

King. Even as thy conduct.

Sol. Then it would appear

My conduct and my life are but the same.

King. I thought thou wert the Infanta of Castille,

Heir to our realm, the paragon of Spain;

The Princess for whose smiles crowned Christendom
Sends forth its sceptred rivals. Is that bitter?

Or bitter is it with such privilege,

And standing on life's vantage ground, to cross

A nation's hope, that on thy nice career

Has gaged its heart?

Sol. Have I no heart to gage?

A sacrificial virgin, must I bind

My life to the altar, to redeem a state,

Or heal some doomed people?

King. Is it so?

Is this an office alien to thy sex?

Or what thy youth repudiates? We but ask

What nature sanctions.

Sol. Nature sanctions Love;

Your charter is more liberal. Let that pass.

I am no stranger to my duty, Sir,

And read it thus. The blood that shares my sceptre

Should be august as mine. A woman loses

In love what she may gain in rank, who tops

Her husband's place: though throned, I would exchange

An equal glance. His name should be a spell

To rally soldiers. Politic he should be;

And skilled in climes and tongues, that stranger knights

Should bruit our high Castilian courtesies.

Such chief might please a state?

King. Fortunate realm!

Sol. And shall I own less niceness than my realm?

No! I would have him handsome as a god;

Hyperion in his splendour, or the mien

Of conquering Bacchus, one whose very step

Should guide a limner, and whose common words

Are caught by Troubadours to frame their songs!

And O, my father, what if this bright prince

Should have a heart as tender as his soul
 Was high and peerless? If with this same heart
 He loved thy daughter?

King. Close the airy page
 Of thy romance; such princes are not found
 Except in lays and legends; yet a man
 Who would become a throne, I found thee, girl;
 The princely Hungary.

Sol. A more princely fate,
 Than an unwilling wife, he did deserve.

King. Yet wherefore didst thou pledge thy troth to him?

Sol. And wherefore do I smile when I should sigh?
 And wherefore do I feed when I would fast?
 And wherefore do I dance when I should pray?
 And wherefore do I live when I should die?
 Canst answer that, good Sir? O there are women
 The world deem mad, or worse, whose life but seems
 One vile caprice, a freakish thing of whims
 And restless nothingness; yet if we pierce
 The soul, may be we'll touch some cause profound
 For what seems causeless. Early love despised,
 Or baffled, which is worse; a faith betrayed,
 For vanity or lucre; chill regards,
 Where to gain constant glances we have paid
 Some fearful forfeit: here are many springs,
 Unmarked by shallow eyes, and some, or all
 Of these, or none, may prompt my conduct now—
 But I'll not have thy prince.

King. My gentle child—

Sol. I am not gentle: I might have been once;
 But gentle thoughts and I have parted long;
 The cause of such partition thou shouldst know,
 If memories were just.

King. Harp not, I pray,
 On an old sorrow.

Sol. Old! he calls it old!
 The wound is green, and staunch it, or I die.

King. Have I the skill?

Sol. Why! art thou not a King?
 Wherein consists the magic of a crown

But in the bold achievement of a deed
Would scare a clown to dream?

King. I'd read thy thought.

Sol. Then have it; I would marry.

King. It is well:

It is my wish.

Sol. And unto such a prince
As I've described withal. For though a prince
Of Fancy's realm alone, as thou dost deem,
Yet doth he live indeed.

King. To me unknown.

Sol. O! father mine, before thy reverend knees
Ere this we twain have knelt.

King. Forbear, my child;
Or can it be my daughter doth not know
He is no longer free?

Sol. The power that bound him,
That bondage might dissolve? To holy church
Thou hast given great alms?

King. There's more to gain thy wish,
If more would gain it; but it cannot be,
Even were he content.

Sol. He is content.

King. Hah!

Sol. For he loves me still.

King. I would do much
To please thee. I'm prepared to bear the brunt
Of Hungary's ire; but do not urge, Solisa,
Beyond capacity of sufferance
My temper's proof.

Sol. Alarcos is my husband,
Or shall the sceptre from our line depart.
Listen, ye saints of Spain, I'll have his hand,
Or by our faith, my fated womb shall be
As barren as thy love, proud King.

King. Thou'rt mad!
Thou'rt mad.

Sol. Is he not mine? Thy very hand
Did it not consecrate our vows? What claim
So sacred as my own?

King. He did conspire—

Sol. 'Tis false, thou know'st 'tis false—against themselves
Men do not plot—I would as soon believe
My hand could hatch a treason 'gainst my sight,
As that Alarcos would conspire to seize
A diadem, I would myself have placed
Upon his brow.

King (taking her hand.) Nay, calmness—Say 'tis true
He was not guilty, say perchance he was not—

Sol. Perchance, O! vile perchance. Thou know'st full well,
Because he did reject her loose desires
And wanton overtures—

King. Hush, hush, O hush!

Sol. The woman called my mother—

King. Spare me, spare—

Sol. Who spared me?

Did not I kneel, and vouch his faith, and bathe
Thy hand with my quick tears, and clutch thy robe
With frantic grasp. Spare, spare indeed! In faith
Thou hast taught me to be merciful, thou hast,—
Thou and my mother!

King. Ah! no more, no more!
A crowned King cannot recall the past,
And yet may glad the future. She thou namest,
She was at least thy mother; but to me,
Whate'er her deeds, for truly, there were times
Some spirit did possess her, such as gleams
Now in her daughter's eye, she was a passion,
A witching form that did inflame my life
By a breath or glance. Thou art our child; the link
That binds me to my race—thou hast her place
Within my shrined heart, where thou'rt the priest
And others are unhallowed; for, indeed,
Passion and time have so dried up my soul,
And drained its generous juices, that I own
No sympathy with man, and all his hopes
To me are mockeries.

Sol. Ah! I see, my father,
That thou will'st aid me!

King. Thou can'st aid thyself.

Is there a law to let him from thy presence?
 His voice may reach thine ear; thy gracious glance
 May meet his graceful offices. Go to—
 Shall Hungary frown, if his right royal spouse
 Smile on the equal of her blood and state,
 Her gentle cousin?

Sol. And is this thine aid!

King. What word has roughed the brow, but now confiding
 In a fond father's love?

Sol. Alas, what word—

What have I said—what done? that thou should'st deem
 I could do this, this, this that is so foul,
 My baffled tongue deserts me. Thou should'st know me,
 Thou hast set spies on me—What, have they told thee
 I am a wanton? I do love this man
 As fits a virgin's heart—Heaven sent such thoughts
 To be our solace. But to act a toy
 For his loose hours, or worse, to find him one
 Procured for mine, grateful for opportunities
 Contrived with decency, spared skilfully
 From claims more urgent; not to dare to show
 Before the world my homage; when he's ill
 To be away, and only share his gay
 And lusty pillow; to be shut out from all
 That multitude of cares and charms that waits
 But on companionship; and then to feel
 These joys another shares, another hand
 These delicate rites performs, and thou'rt remembered,
 In the serener heaven of his bliss,
 But as the transient flash—this is not love—
 This is pollution.

King. Daughter, I were pleased
 My cousin could a nearer claim prefer
 To my regard. Ay, girl, 'twould please me well
 He were my son, thy husband—but what then?
 My pleasure and his conduct jar—his fate
 Baulks our desire—he's married and has heirs.

Sol. Heirs, did'st thou say heirs?

King. What ails thee?

Sol. Heirs, heirs?

King. Thou art very pale?

Sol. The faintness of the morn
Clings to me still; I pray thee, father, grant
Thy child one easy boon.

King. She has to speak
But what she wills.

Sol. Why, then, she would renounce
Her heritage—yes, place our ancient crown
On brows it may become. A veil more suits
This feminine brain; in Huelgas' cloistered shades
I'll find oblivion.

King. Woe is me! The doom
Falls on our house. I had this daughter left
To lavish all my wealth on and my might.
I've treasured for her; for her I have slain
My thousands, conquered provinces, betrayed,
Renewed, and broken faith. She was my joy;
She has her mother's eyes, and when she speaks,
Her voice is like Brunhalda's. Cursed hour,
That a wild fancy touched her brain to cross
All my great hopes!

Sol. My father, my dear father,
Thou call'st me fondly, but some moments past
Thy gentle child. I call my saint to witness
I would be such. To say I love this man
Is shallow phrasing. Since man's image first
Flung its wild shadow on my virgin soul,
It has borne no other reflex. I know well
Thou deemest he was forgotten; this day's passion
Passed as unused confrontment, and so transient
As it was turbulent. No, no, full oft,
When thinking on him, I have been the same.
Fruitless or barren, this same form is his,
Or it is God's. My father, my dear father,
Remember he was mine, and thou didst pour
Thy blessing on our heads! O God, O God!
When I recall the passages of love
That have ensued between me and this man,
And with thy sanction, and then just bethink
He is another's, O it makes me mad—

Talk not to me of sceptres, can she rule
 Whose mind is anarchy? King of Castille,
 Give me the heart that thou didst rob me of!
 The penal hour's at hand. Thou didst destroy
 My love, and I will end thy line—thy line
 That is thy life.

King. Solisa, I will do all
 A father can,—a father and a King.

Sol. Give me Alarcos.

King. Hush, disturb me not;
 I'm in the throes of some imaginings
 A human voice might scare.

End of the First Act.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Street in Burgos.

Enter the COUNT of SIDONIA and the COUNT of LEON.

Sido. Is she not fair?

Leon. What then? She but fulfils
Her office as a woman. For to be
A woman and not fair, is, in my creed,
To be a thing unsexed.

Sido. Happy Alarcos!
They say she was of Aquitaine, a daughter
Of the De Foix. I would I had been banished.

Leon. Go and plot then. They cannot take your head,
For that is gone.

Sido. But banishment from Burgos
Were worse than fifty deaths. O, my good Leon,
Didst ever see, didst ever dream could be,
Such dazzling beauty?

Leon. Dream! I never dream;
Save when I've revelled over late, and then
My visions are most villainous; but you,
You dream when you're awake.

Sido. Wert ever, Leon,
In pleasant Aquitaine?

Leon. O talk of Burgos;
It is my only subject—matchless town,
Where all I ask are patriarchal years
To feel satiety like my sad friend.

Sido. 'Tis not satiety now makes me sad ;
So check thy mocking tongue, or cure my cares.

Leon. Absence cures love. Be off to Aquitaine.

Sido. I chose a jester for my friend, and feel
His value now.

Leon. You share the lover's lot
When you desire and you despair. What then?
You know right well that woman is but one
Though she take many forms, and can confound
The young with subtle aspects. Vanity
Is her sole being. Make the myriad vows
That passionate fancy prompts. At the next tourney
Maintain her colours, 'gainst the two Castilles
And Aragon to boot. You'll have her!

Sido. Why!
This was the way I woo'd the haughty Lara,
But I'll not hold such passages approach
The gentle lady of this morn.

Leon. Well, then,
Try silence, only sighs and hasty glances
Withdrawn as soon as met. Couldst thou but blush
—But there's no hope. In time our sighs become
A sort of plaintive hint what hopeless rogues
Our stars have made us. Would we had but met
Earlier, yet still we hope she'll spare a tear
To one she met too late. Trust me she'll spare it ;
She'll save this sinner who reveres a saint.
Pity or admiration gains them all.
You'll have her.

Sido. Well, whate'er the course pursued,
Be thou a prophet!

Enter ORAN.

Oran. Stand, Senors, in God's name.

Leon. Or the devil's.

Well, what do you want?

Oran. Many things, but one
Most principal.

Sido. And that's—

Oran. A friend.

Leon. You're right
To seek one in the street, he'll prove as true
As any that you're fostered with.

Oran. In brief,
I'm as you see a Moor; and I have slain
One of our princes. Peace exists between
Our kingdom and Castille; they track my steps.
You're young, you should be brave, generous you may be.
I shall be impaled. Save me!

Leon. Frankly spoken.
Will you turn Christian?

Oran. Show me Christian acts
And they may prompt to Christian thoughts.

Sido. Although
The slain's an infidel, thou art the same.
The cause of this rash deed?

Oran. I am a soldier,
And my sword's notched, sirs. This said Emir struck me,
Before the people too, in the great square
Of our chief place, Granada, and forsooth,
Because I would not yield the way at mosque.
His life has soothed my honour: if I die,
I die content; but with your gracious aid
I would live happy.

Leon. You love life?

Oran. Most dearly.

Leon. Sensible Moor, although he be impaled
For mobbing in a mosque. I like this fellow;
His bearing suits my humour. He shall live
To do more murders. Come, bold infidel,
Follow to the Leon Palace;—and, Sir, prithee
Don't stab us in the back. [*Exeunt omnes.*]

SCENE II.

Chamber in the Palace of COUNT ALARCOS. At the back of the Scene the Curtains of a large Jalousy withdrawn.

Enter COUNT ALARCOS.

Alar. 'Tis circumstance makes conduct; life's a ship,
The sport of every wind. And yet men tack
Against the adverse blast. How shall I steer,
Who am the pilot of Necessity?
But whether it be fair or foul, I know not;
Sunny or terrible. Why let her wed him?
What care I if the pageant's weight may fall
On Hungary's ermined shoulders, if the spring
Of all her life be mine? The tiared brow
Alone makes not a king. Would that my wife
Confessed a worldlier mood! Her recluse fancy
Haunts still our castled bowers. Thou civic air
Inflame her thoughts! Teach her to vie and revel,
Find sport in peerless robes, the pomp of feasts
And ambling of a genet— *[A serenade is heard.*

Hah, that voice
Should not be strange. A tribute to her charms.
'Tis music sweeter to a spouse's ear,
Than gallants dream of. Ay, she'll find adorers,
Or Burgos is right changed.

Enter the COUNTESS.

Listen, child.
[Again the serenade is heard.

Coun. 'Tis very sweet.

Alar. It is inspired by thee.

Coun. Alarcos!

Alar. Why dost look so grave? Nay, now,
There's not a dame in Burgos would not give
Her jewels for such songs.

Coun. Inspired by me!

Alar. And who so fit to fire a lover's breast?
He's clearly captive.

Coun. O ! thou knowest I love not
Such jests, Alarcos.

Alar. Jest ! I do not jest.
I am right proud the partner of my state
Should count the chief of our Castillian knights
Among her train.

Coun. I pray thee let me close
These blinds.

Alar. Poh, poh ! what baulk a serenade ?
'Twould be an outrage to the courtesies
Of this great city. Faith ! his voice is sweet.

Coun. Would that he had not sung ! It is a sport
In which I find no pastime.

Alar. Marry, come
It gives me great delight. 'Tis well for thee,
On thy first entrance to our world, to find
So high a follower.

Coun. Wherefore should I need
His following ?

Alar. Nought's more excellent for woman,
Than to be fixed on as the cynosure
Of one, whom all do gaze on. 'Tis a stamp
Whose currency, not wealth, rank, blood, can match :
These are raw ingots, till they are impressed
With fashion's picture.

Coun. Would I were once more
Within our castle !

Alar. Nursery days ! The world
Is now our home, and we must worldly be,
Like its bold stirrers. I sup with the King.
There is no feast, and yet to do me honour,
Some chiefs will meet. I stand right well at court,
And with thine aid will stand e'en better.

Coun. Mine !
I have no joy but in thy joy, no thought
But for thy honour, and yet how to aid
Thee in these plans or hopes, indeed, Alarcos,
Indeed, I am perplexed.

Alar. Art not my wife ?
Is not this Burgos ? And this pile, the palace

Of my great fathers? They did raise these halls
 To be the symbols of their high estate,
 The fit and haught metropolis of all
 Their force and faction. Fill them, fill them, wife;
 With those who'll serve me well. Make this the centre
 Of all that's great in Burgos. Let it be
 The eye of the town, whereby we may perceive
 What passes in its heart: the clustering point
 Of all convergence. Here be troops of friends
 And ready instruments. Wear that sweet smile,
 That wins a partizan quicker than power;
 Speak in that tone gives each a special share
 In thy regard, and what is general
 Let all deem private. O! thou'lt play it rarely.

Coun. I would do all that may become thy wife.

Alar. I know it, I know it. Thou art a treasure, Florimonde.

And this same singer—thou hast not asked his name.
 Didst guess it? Ah! upon thy gentle cheek
 I see a smile.

Coun. My lord—indeed—

Alar. Thou playest
 Thy game less like a novice than I deemed.
 Thou canst not say thou didst not catch the voice
 Of the Sidonia?

Coun. My good lord, indeed
 His voice to me is as unknown as mine
 Must be to him.

Alar. Whose should the voice but his,
 Whose stricken sight left not thy face an instant,
 But gazed as if some new-born star had risen
 To light his way to paradise? I tell thee,
 Among my strict confederates I would count
 This same young noble. He is a paramount chief;
 Perchance his vassals might outnumber mine,
 Conjoined we're adamant. No monarch's breath
 Makes me again an exile. Florimonde,
 Smile on him—smiles cost nothing; should he judge
 They mean more than they say, why smile again;
 And what he deems affection, registered,

Is but chaste mockery. I must to the citadel.
Sweet wife, good night. *[Exit ALARCOS.]*

Coun. O! misery, misery, misery!
Must we do this? I fear there's need we must,
For he is wise in all things, and well learned
In this same world that to my simple sense
Seems very fearful. Why should men rejoice,
They can escape from the pure breath of heaven
And the sweet franchise of their natural will,
To such a prison-house? To be confined
In body and in soul; to breathe the air
Of dark close streets, and never use one's tongue
But for some measured phrase that hath its bent
Well guaged and chartered; to find ready smiles
When one is sorrowful, or looks demure
When one would laugh outright. Never to be
Exact but when dissembling. Is this life?
I dread this city. As I passed its gates
My litter stumbled, and the children shrieked
And clung unto my bosom. Pretty babes!
I'll go to them. O! there is innocence
Even in Burgos. *[Exit COUNTESS.]*

SCENE III.

A Chamber in the Royal Palace. The INFANTA SOLISA alone.

Sol. I can but think my father will be just
And see us righted. O 'tis only honest,
The hand that did this wrong should now supply
The sovereign remedy, and balm the wound
Itself inflicted. He is with him now:
Would I were there, unseen, yet seeing all!
But ah! no cunning arras could conceal
This throbbing heart. I've sent my little Page,
To mingle with the minions of the court,
And get me news. How he doth look, how eat,
What says he and what does, and all the haps

Of this same night, that yet to me may bring
A cloudless morrow. See, even now he comes!

Enter the PAGE.

Prithee what news? Now tell me all, my child;
When thou'rt a knight, will I not work the scarf
For thy first tourney! Prithee tell me all.

Page. O lady mine, the royal Seneschal
He was so crabbed, I did scarcely deem
I could have entered.

Sol. Cross-grained Seneschal!
He shall repent of this, my pretty page,
But thou didst enter?

Page. I did so contrive.

Sol. Rare imp! And then?

Page. Well, as you told me, then
I mingled with the Pages of the King.
They're not so very tall; I might have passed
I think for one upon a holiday.

Sol. O thou shall pass for better than a Page.
But tell me, child, didst see my gallant Count?

Page. On the right hand—

Sol. Upon the King's right hand?

Page. Upon the King's right hand, and there were also—

Sol. Mind not the rest; thou'rt sure on the right hand?

Page. Most sure; and on the left—

Sol. Ne'er mind the left,
Speak only of the right. How did he seem?
Did there pass words between him and the King?
Often or scant? Did he seem gay or grave?
Or was his aspect of a middle tint,
As if he deemed that there were other joys
Not found within that chamber?

Page. Sooth to say,
He did seem what he is, a gallant knight.
Would I were such! For talking with the King,
He spoke, yet not so much but he could spare
Words to the other lords. He often smiled,
Yet not so often, that a limner might
Describe his mien as jovial.

Sol. 'Tis himself!

What next? Will they sit long?

Page. I should not like
Myself to quit such company. In truth,
The Count of Leon is a merry lord,
There were some tilting jests, I warrant you,
Between him and your knight.

Sol. O tell it me.

Page. The Count Alarcos, as I chanced to hear,
For tiptoe even would not let me see,
And that same Pedro, who is lately come
To court, the Senor of Montilla's son,
He is so rough, and says a lady's page
Should only be where there are petticoats.

Sol. Is he sorough? He shall be soundly whipped.
But tell me, child, the Count Alarcos—

Page. Well,
The Count Alarcos—but indeed, sweet lady,
I do not wish that Pedro should be whipped.

Sol. He shall not then be whipped—speak of the Count.

Page. The Count was showing how your Saracen
Doth take your lion captive, thus and thus;
And fashioned with his scarf a dextrous noose
Made of a tiger's skin: your unicorn
They say is just as good.

Sol. Well, then Sir Leon—

Page. Why then your Count of Leon—but just then
Sancho, the Viscount of Toledo's son,
The King's chief page, takes me his handkerchief
And binds it on my eyes, he whispering round
Unto his fellows, here you see I've caught
A most ferocious cub. Whereat they kicked,
And pinched, and cuffed me till I nearly roared
As fierce as any lion, you be sure.

Sol. Rude Sancho, he shall sure be sent from court!
My little Ferdinand—thou hast incurred
Great perils for thy mistress. Go again
And show this signet to the Seneschal,
And tell him that no greater courtesy
Be shown to any guest than to my Page.

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This from myself—or I perchance will send,
Shall school their pranks. Away, my faithful imp,
And tell me how the Count Alarcos seems.

Page. I go, sweet Lady, but I humbly beg
Sancho may not be sent from court this time.

Sol. Sancho shall stay. *[Exit PAGE.]*

I hope, ere long, sweet child,
Thou too shalt be a page unto a king.
I'm glad Alarcos smiled not overmuch;
Your smilers please me not. I love a face
Pensive, not sad; for where the mood is thoughtful,
The passion is most deep and most refined.
Gay tempers bear light hearts—are soonest gained
And soonest lost; but he who meditates
On his own nature, will as deeply scan
The mind he meets, and when he loves, he casts
His anchor deep.

Re-enter PAGE.

Give me the news.

Page. The news!

I could not see the Seneschal, but gave
Your message to the Pages. Whereupon
Sancho, the Viscount of Toledo's son,
Pedro, the Senor of Montilla's son,
The young Count of Almeira, and—

Sol. My child,
What ails thee?

Page. O the Viscount of Jodar,
I think he was the very worst of all;
But Sancho of Toledo was the first.

Sol. What did they?

Page. 'Las, no sooner did I say
All that you told me, than he gives the word,
"A guest, a guest, a very potent guest,"
Takes me a goblet brimful of strong wine
And hands it to me, mocking, on his knee.
This I decline, when on his back they lay
Your faithful page, nor set me on my legs
Till they had drenched me with this fiery stuff,

That I could scarcely see, or reel my way
Back to your presence.

Sol. Marry, 'tis too much
E'en for a page's license. Ne'er you mind,
They shall to prison by to-morrow's dawn.
I'll bound this kerchief round your brow, its scent
Will much revive you. Go, child, lie you down
On yonder couch.

Page. I'm sure I ne'er can sleep
If Sancho of Toledo shall be sent
To-morrow's dawn to prison.

Sol. Well, he's pardoned.

Page. Also the Senor of Montilla's son.

Sol. He shall be pardoned too. Now prithee sleep.

Page. The young Count of Almeira—

Sol. O! no more,
They all are pardoned.

Page. I do humbly pray
The Viscount of Jodar be pardoned too.

[*Exit SOLISA.*]

SCENE IV.

*A Banquet; the KING seated; on his right ALARCOS.
SIDONIA, LEON, the ADMIRAL OF CASTILLE, and other
LORDS. Groups of PAGES, CHAMBERLAINS, and SERVING-
MEN.*

The KING.

Wouldst match them, cousin, 'gainst our barbs?

Alar. Against
Our barbs, Sir!

King. Eh, Lord Leon—you can scan
A courser's points?

Leon. O, Sir, your travellers
Need fleeter steeds than we poor shambling folks
Who stay at home. To my unskilful sense,
Speed for the chase and vigour for the tilt,
Me seems enough.

Alar. If riders be as prompt.
Leon. Our tourney is put off, or please your Grace,
 I'd try conclusions with this marvellous beast,
 This Pegasus, this courser of the sun,
 That is to blind us all with his bright rays,
 And cloud our chivalry.

King. My Lord Sidonia,
 You're a famed judge—try me this Cyprus wine ;
 An English prince did give it me, returning
 From the holy sepulchre.

Sido. Most rare, my liege,
 And glitters like a gem !

King. It doth content
 Me much, your Cyprus wine.—Lord Admiral,
 Hast heard the news? The Saracens have fled
 Before the Italian galleys.

The Admiral of Castille. No one guides
 A galley like your Pisan.

Alar. The great Doge
 Of Venice, sooth, would barely veil his flag
 To Pisa.

Adm. Your Venetian hath his craft.
 This Saracenic rout will surely touch
 Our turbaned neighbours?

King. To the very core,
 Granada's all a-mourning. Good, my Lords,
 One goblet more. We'll give our cousin's health.
 Here's to the Count Alarcos.

Omnes. To the Count
 Alarcos.

(The guests rise, pay their homage to the KING, and are retiring.)

King. Good night, Lord Admiral ; my Lord of Leon,
 My Lord Sidonia, and my Lord of Lara,
 Gentle adieus ; to you, my Lord, and you,
 To all and each. Cousin, good night—and yet
 A moment rest awhile ; since your return
 I've looked on you in crowds, it may become us
 To say farewell alone.

(The KING waves his hand to the SENESCHAL—the chamber is cleared.)

Alar. Most gracious Sire,
You honour your poor servant.

King. Prithee, sit.
This scattering of the Saracen, methinks,
Will hold the Moor to his truce?

Alar. It would appear
To have that import.

King. Should he pass the mountains,
We can receive him.

Alar. Where's the crown in Spain
More prompt and more prepared?

King. Cousin, you're right.
We flourish. By St. James, I feel a glow
Of the heart to see you here once more, my cousin;
I'm low in the vale of years, and yet I think
I could defend my crown with such a knight
On my right hand.

Alar. Such liege and land would raise
Our lances high.

King. We carry all before us.
Leon reduced, the crescent paled in Cordova—
Why, if she gain Valencia, Aragon
Must kick the beam. And shall she gain Valencia?
It cheers my blood to find thee by my side.
Old days, old days return, when thou to me
Wert as the apple of mine eye.

Alar. My liege,
This is indeed most gracious.

King. Gentle cousin,
Thou shalt have cause to say that I am gracious.
O! I did ever love thee; and for that
Some passages occurred between us once,
That touch my memory to the quick; I would
Even pray thee to forget them—and to hold
I was mostly vilely practised on, my mind
Poisoned, and from a fountain, that to deem
Tainted were frenzy.

Alar. (Falling on his knee, and taking the KING's hand.)

My most gracious liege,
This morn to thee I did my fealty pledge.
Believe me, Sire, I did so with clear breast,
And with no thought to thee and to thy line
But fit devotion.

King. O, I know it well,
I know thou art right true. Mine eyes are moist
To see thee here again.

Alar. It is my post,
Nor could I seek another.

King. Thou dost know
That Hungary leaves us?

Alar. I was grieved to hear
There were some crosses.

King. Truth, I am not grieved.
Is it such joy this fair Castillian realm,
This growing flower of Spain, be rudely plucked
By a strange hand? To see our chambers filled
With foreign losels; our rich fiefs and abbeys
The prey of each bold scatterling, that finds
No heirship in his country? Have I lived
And laboured for this end, to swell the sails
Of alien fortunes? O my gentle cousin,
There was a time we had far other hopes!
I suffer for my deeds.

Alar. We must forget,
We must forget, my liege.

King. Is't then so easy?
Thou hast no daughter. Ah! thou canst not tell
What 'tis to feel a father's policy
Hath dimmed a child's career. A child so peerless!
Our race, though ever comely, vailed to her.
A palm tree in its pride of sunny youth
Mates not her symmetry; her step was noticed
As strangely stately by her nurse. Dost know,
I ever deemed that winning smile of hers
Mournful with all its mirth? But ah! no more
A father gossips; nay, my weakness 'tis not,
'Tis not with all that I would prattle thus;

But you, my cousin, know Solisa well,—

And once you loved her.

Alar. (rising.) Once! O God!

Such passions are eternity.

King. (advancing.) What then,

Shall this excelling creature, on a throne

As high as her deserts, shall she become

A spoil for strangers? Have I cause to grieve

That Hungary quits us? O that I could find

Some noble of our land might dare to mix

His equal blood with our Castillian seed!

Art thou more learned in our pedigrees?

Hast thou no friend, no kinsman? Must this realm

Fall to the spoiler, and a foreign graft

Be nourished by our sap?

Alar. Alas! alas!

King. Four crowns; our paramount Castille, and Leon,

Seviglia, Cordova, the future hope

Of Murcia, and the inevitable doom

That waits the Saracen; all, all, all, all—

And with my daughter!

Alar. Ah! ye should have blasted

My homeward path, ye lightnings!

King. Such a son

Should grudge his sire no days. I would not live

To whet ambition's appetite. I'm old;

And fit for little else than hermit thoughts.

The day that gives my daughter, gives my crown:

A cell's my home.

Alar. O, life I will not curse thee!

Let bald and shaven crowns denounce thee vain;

To me thou wert no shade! I loved thy stir

And panting struggle. Power, and pomp, and beauty,

Cities and courts, the palace and the fane,

The chace, the revel, and the battle-field,

Man's fiery glance, and woman's thrilling smile,

I loved ye all: I curse not thee, O life!

But on my stars confusion. May they fall

From out their spheres, and blast our earth no more

With their malignant rays, that mocking placed

All the delights of life within my reach,
And chained me from fruition.

King. Gentle cousin,
Thou art disturbed; I fear these words of mine,
Chance words ere I did say to thee good night—
For O 'twas joy to see thee here again,
Who art my kinsman—and my only one—
Have touched on some old cares for both of us.
And yet the world hath many charms for thee;
Thou'rt not like us, and that unhappy child
The world esteems so favoured.

Alar. Ah, the world
Ill estimates the truth of any lot.
Their speculation is too far and reaches
Only externals—they are ever fair.
There are vile cankers in your gaudiest flowers,
But you must pluck and peer within the leaves
To catch the pest.

King. Alas! my gentle cousin,
To hear thou hast thy sorrows too, like us,
It pains me much, and yet I'll not believe it;
For with so fair a wife—

Alar. Torture me not,
Although thou art a King.

King. My gentle cousin,
I spoke to solace thee. We all do hear
Thou art most favoured in a right fair wife.
We do desire to see her; can she find
A friend becomes her better than our child?

Alar. My wife? would she were not!

King. I say so too,
Would she were not!

Alar. Ah me! why did I marry?

King. Truth, it was very rash.

Alar. Who made me rash?
Who drove me from my hearth, and sent me forth
On the unkindred earth? With that dark spleen
Goaded injustice, that 'tis vain to quell,
Entails on restless spirits. Yes, I married,
As men do oft, from very wantonness;

To tamper with a destiny that's cross,
 To spite my fate, to put the seal upon
 A balked career, in high and proud defiance
 Of hopes that yet might mock me, to beat down
 False expectation and its damned lures,
 And fix a bar betwixt me and defeat.

King. These bitter words would rob me of my hope,
 That thou at least wert happy.

Alar. Would I slept
 With my grey fathers!

King. And my daughter too!
 O most unhappy pair!

Alar. There is a way
 To cure such woes, one only.

King. 'Tis my thought.

Alar. No cloister shall entomb this life; the grave
 Shall be my refuge.

King. Yet to die were witless,
 When Death, who with his fatal finger taps
 At princely doors, as freely as he gives
 His summons to the serf, may at this instant
 Have sealed the only life, that throws a shade
 Between us and the sun.

Alar. She's very young.

King. And may live long, as I do hope she will;
 Yet have I known as blooming as she die,
 And that most suddenly. The air of cities
 To unaccustomed lungs is very fatal;
 Perchance the absence of her custom'd sports,
 The presence of strange faces, and a longing
 For those she has been bred among—I've known
 This most pernicious—she might droop and pine—
 And when they fail, they sink most rapidly.
 God grant she may not; yet I do remind thee
 Of this wild chance, when speaking of thy lot.
 In truth 'tis sharp, and yet I would not die
 When Time, the great enchanter, may change all,
 By bringing somewhat earlier to thy gate
 A doom that must arrive.

Alar. Would it were there!

King. 'Twould be the day thy hand should clasp my daughter's,

That thou hast loved so long ; 'twould be the day
My crown, the crown of all my realms, Alarcos,
Should bind thy royal brow. Is this the morn
Breaks in our chamber? Why, I did but mean
To say good night unto my gentle cousin
So long unseen—O we have gossipped, coz,
So cheering, dreams!

[*Exeunt.*

End of the Second Act.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Interior of the Cathedral of Burgos. The High Altar illuminated; in the distance, various Chapels lighted, and in each of which Mass is celebrating: in all directions groups of kneeling Worshippers. Before the High Altar the Prior of Burgos officiates, attended by his Sacerdotal Retinue. In the front of the Stage, opposite to the Audience, a Confessional.

*The chaunting of a solemn Mass here commences; as it ceases,
Enter ALARCOS.*

Alar. Would it were done, and yet I dare not say
It should be done. O that some natural cause,
Or superhuman agent, would step in,
And save me from its practice! Will no pest
Descend upon her blood? Must thousands die
Daily, and her charmed life be spared? As young
Are hourly plucked from out their hearths. A life!
Why what's a life? A loan that must return
To a capricious creditor; recalled
Often as soon as lent. I'd wager mine
To-morrow like the dice, were my blood pricked.
Yet now—
When all that endows life with all its price,
Hangs on some flickering breath I could puff out,
I stand agape. I'll dream 'tis done; what then?
Mercy remains? For ever, not for ever
I charge my soul? Will no contrition ransom,

Or expiatory torments compensate
 The awful penalty? Ye kneeling worshippers,
 That gaze in silent ecstasy before
 Yon flaming altar, you come here to bow
 Before a God of mercy. Is't not so?

[ALARCOS walks towards the High Altar and kneels.

A Procession advances from the back of the Scene singing a solemn mass, and preceding the Prior of Burgos, who seats himself in the Confessional, his Train filing off on each side of the Scene: the lights of the High Altar are extinguished, but the Chapels remain illuminated.

The Prior. Within this chair I sit, and hold the keys
 That open realms no conqueror can subdue,
 And where the monarchs of the earth must fain
 Solicit to be subjects: Heaven and Hades,
 Lands of immortal light and shores of gloom
 Eternal as the chorus of their wail,
 And the dim isthmus of that middle space,
 Where the compassionate soul may purge its sins
 In pious expiation. Then advance
 Ye children of all sorrows, and all sins,
 Doubts that perplex, and hopes that tantalize
 All the wild forms the fiend Temptation takes
 To tamper with the soul! Come with the care
 That eats your daily life; come with the thought
 That is conceived in the noon of night,
 And makes us stare around us though alone;
 Come with the engendering sin, and with the crime
 That is full-born. To counsel and to soothe,
 I sit within this chair.

[ALARCOS advances and kneels by the Confessional.

Alar. O, holy father!

My soul is burthened with a crime.

Prior. My son,

The church awaits thy sin.

Alar. It is a sin.
Most black and terrible. Prepare thine ear
For what must make it tremble.

Prior. Thou dost speak
To power above all passion, not to man.

Alar. There was a lady, father, whom I loved,
And with a holy love, and she loved me
As holily. Our vows were blessed, if favour
Hang on a father's benediction.

Prior. Her
Mother?

Alar. She had a mother, if to bear
Children be all that makes a mother: one
Who looked on me, about to be her child,
With eyes of lust.

Prior. And thou?

Alar. O, if to trace
But with the memory's too veracious aid
This tale be anguish, what must be its life
And terrible action? Father, I abjured
This lewd she-wolf. But ah! her fatal vengeance
Struck to my heart. A banished scatterling
I wandered on the earth.

Prior. Thou didst return?

Alar. And found the being that I loved, and found
Her faithful still.

Prior. And thou, my son, wert happy?

Alar. Alas! I was no longer free. Strange ties
Had bound a hopeless exile. But she I had loved,
And never ceased to love, for in the form,
Not in the spirit was her faith more pure,
She looked upon me with a glance that told
Her death but in my love. I struggled, nay,
'Twas not a struggle, 'twas an agony.
Her aged sire, her dark impending doom,
And the o'erwhelming passion of my soul—
My wife died suddenly.

Prior. And by a life
That should have shielded hers?

Alar. Is there no hope of mercy?

Can prayers, can penances, can they avail?
 What consecration of my wealth, for I'm rich,
 Can aid me? Can it aid me? Can endowments—
 Nay, set no bounds to thy unlimited schemes
 Of saving charity. Can shrines, can chauntries,
 Monastic piles, can they avail? What if
 I raise a temple not less proud than this,
 Enriched with all my wealth, with all, with all?
 Will endless masses, will eternal prayers,
 Redeem me from perdition?

Prior. What would gold
 Redeem the sin it prompted?

Alar. No, by Heaven.
 No, Fate had dowered me with wealth might feed
 All but a royal hunger.

Prior. And alone
 Thy fatal passion urged thee?

Alar. Hah!

Prior. Probe deep
 Thy wounded soul.

Alar. 'Tis torture: fathomless
 I feel the fell incision.

Prior. There's a lure
 Thou dost not own, and yet its awful shade
 Lowers in the back-ground of thy soul—thy tongue
 Trifles the church's ear. Beware, my son,
 And tamper not with Paradise.

Alar. A breath,
 A shadow, essence subtler far than love,
 And yet I loved her, and for love had dared
 All that I ventured for this twin-born lure
 Cradled with love, for which I soiled my soul.
 O, father, it was Power.

Prior. And this dominion
 Purchased by thy soul's mortgage, still is't thine?

Alar. Yea, thousands bow to him, who bows to thee.

Prior. Thine is a fearful deed.

Alar. O, is there mercy?

Prior. Say, is there penitence?

Alar. How shall I gauge it?

What temper of contrition might the church
Require from such a sinner?

Prior. Is't thy wish,
Nay search the very caverns of thy thought,
Is it thy wish this deed were now undone?

Alar. Undone, undone! It is—O say it were,
And what am I? O, father, wer't not done,
I should not be less tortured than I'm now;
My life less like a dream of haunting thoughts
Tempting to unknown enormities. The sun
Would rise as beamless on my darkened days,
Night proffer the same torments. Food would fly
My lips the same, and the same restless blood
Quicken my harassed limbs. Undone! undone!
I have no metaphysick faculty
To deem this deed undone.

Prior. Thou must repent
This terrible deed. Look through thy heart. Thy wife,
There was a time thou lovest her?

Alar. I'll not think
There was a time.

Prior. And was she fair?

Alar. A form

Dazzling all eyes but mine.

Prior. And pure?

Alar. No saint
More chaste than she. Her consecrated shape
She kept as 'twere a shrine, and just as full
Of holy thoughts; her very breath was incense,
And all her gestures sacred as the forms
Of priestly offices!

Prior. I'll save thy soul.
Thou must repent that one so fair and pure,
And loving thee so well——

Alar. Father, in vain.

There is a bar betwixt me and repentance
And yet——

Prior. Ay yet——

Alar. The day may come, I'll kneel
In such a mood, and might there then be hope?

Prior. We hold the keys that bind and loosen all :
 But penitence alone is mercy's portal,
 The obdurate soul is doomed. Remorseful tears
 Are sinners' sole ablution. O, my son,
 Bethink ye yet, to die in sin like thine ;
 Eternal masses profit not thy soul,
 Thy consecrated wealth will but upraise
 The monument of thy despair. Once more,
 Ere yet the vesper lights shall fade away,
 I do adjure thee, on the church's bosom
 Pour forth thy contrite heart.

Alar. A contrite heart!
 A stainless hand would count for more. I see
 No drops on mine. My head is weak, my heart
 A wilderness of passion. Prayers, thy prayers!
 [ALARCOS rises suddenly, and exit.]

SCENE II.

Chamber in the Royal Palace.

*The INFANTA seated in despondency; the KING standing
 by her side.*

King. Indeed 'tis noticed.

Sol. Solitude is all
 I ask ; and is it then so great a boon ?

King. Nay, solitude's no princely appanage.
 Our state's a pedestal, which men have raised
 That they may gaze on greatness.

Sol. A false idol,
 And weaker than its worshippers. I've lived
 To feel my station's vanity. O, Death,
 Thou endest all !

King. Thou art too young to die,
 And yet may be too happy. Moody youth
 Toys in its talk with the dark thought of death,
 As if to die were but to change a robe.
 It is their present refuge for all cares
 And each disaster. When the sere has touched

Their flowing locks, they prattle less of death,
Perchance think more of it.

Sol. Why, what is greatness?
Will't give me love, or faith, or tranquil thoughts?
No, no, not even justice.

King. 'Tis thyself
That does thyself injustice. Let the world
Have other speculation than the breach
Of our unfilled vows. They bear too near
And fine affinity to what we would,
Ay! what we will. I would not chose this moment,
Men brood too curiously upon the cause
Of the late rupture, for the cause detected
May bar the consequence.

Sol. A day, an hour
Sufficed to crush me. Weeks and weeks pass on
Since I was promised right.

King. Take thou my sceptre
And do thyself this right. Is't, then, so easy?

Sol. Let him who did the wrong, contrive the means
Of his atonement.

King. All a father can,
I have performed.

Sol. Ah! then there is no hope.
The Bishop of Ossuna, you did say
He was the learnedest clerk in Christendom,
And you would speak to him?

King. What says Alarcos?

Sol. I spoke not to him since I first received
His princely pledge.

King. Call on him to fulfil it.

Sol. Can he do more than kings?

King. Yes, he alone;
Alone it rests with him. This learn from me.
There is no other let.

Sol. I learn from thee
What other lips should tell me.

King. Girl, art sure
Of this same lover?

Sol. O! I'll never doubt him.

King. And yet may be deceived.

Sol. He is as true

As talismanic steel.

King. Why then thou art,
At least thou shouldst be, happy. Smile, Solisa ;
For since the Count is true, there is no bar.
Why dost not smile ?

Sol. I marvel that Alarcos
Hath been so mute on this.

King. But thou art sure
He is most true.

Sol. Why should I deem him true ?
Have I found truth in any ? Woe is me,
I feel as one quite doomed. I know not why
I ever was ill-omened.

King. Listen, girl ;
Probe this same lover to the core—'t may be,
I think he is, most true ; he should be so
If there be faith in vows, and men ne'er break
The pledge it profits them to keep. And yet—

Sol. And what ?

King. To be his sovereign's cherished friend,
And smiled on by the daughter of his King,
Why that might profit him, and please so much
His wife's ill-humour might be borne withal.

Sol. You think him false ?

King. I think he might be true :
But when a man's well placed, he loves not change.

*(Enter at the back of the Scene COUNT ALARCOS disguised.
He advances dropping his Hat and Cloak.)*

Ah, gentle cousin, all our thoughts were thine.

Alar. I marvel men should think. Lady, I'll hope
Thy thoughts are like thyself—most fair.

King. Her thoughts
Are like her fortunes, lofty, but around
The peaks cling vapours.

Alar. Eagles live in clouds,
And they draw royal breath.

King. I'd have her quit

This strange seclusion, cousin. Give thine aid
To festive purposes.

Alar. A root, an egg,
Why there's a feast with a holy mind.

King. If ever
I find my seat within a hermitage,
I'll think the same.

Alar. You have built shrines, sweet lady?

Sol. What then, my Lord?

Alar. Why then you might be worshipped,
If your image were in front—I'd bow down
To anything so fair.

King. Dost know, my cousin,
Who waits me now? The deputies from Murcia.
The realm is ours—(*whispers him*) is thine.

Alar. The church has realms
Wider than both Castilles. But which of them
Will be our lot; that's it.

King. Mine own Solisa,
They wait me in my cabinet—(*aside to her*)
Bethink thee
With whom all rests. [*Exit the KING.*]

Sol. You had sport to day, my Lord?
The King was at the chace.

Alar. I breathed my barb.

Sol. They say the chace hath charm to cheer the spirit.

Alar. 'Tis better than prayers.

Sol. Indeed, I think I'll hunt.

You and my father seem so passing gay.

Alar. Why this is no confessional, no shrine
Haunted with presaged gloom. I should be gay
To look at thee and listen to thy voice;
For if fair pictures and sweet sounds enchant
The soul of man, that are but artifice,
How then am I entranced, this living picture
Bright by my side, and listening to this music
That nature gave thee. What's eternal life
To this inspired mortality! Let priests
And pontiffs thunder, still I feel that here
Is all my joy.

Sol. Ah! why not say thy woe?
 Who stands between thee and thy rights but me?
 Who stands between thee and thine ease but me?
 Who bars thy progress, brings thee cares, but me?
 Lures thee to impossible contracts, goads thy faith
 To mad performance, welcomes thee with sighs,
 And parts from thee with tears? Is this joy?—No!
 I am thine evil genius.

Alar. Say my star
 Of inspiration. This reality
 Baffles their mystic threats. Who talks of cares?
 Why what's a Prince, if his imperial will
 Be bitted by a priest! There's nought impossible.
 Thy sighs are sighs of love, and all thy tears
 But affluent tenderness.

Sol. You sing as sweet
 As did the syrens—is it from the heart,
 Or from the lips that voice?

Alar. Solisa!

Sol. Ay!
 My ear can catch a treacherous tone; 'tis trained
 To perfidy. My Lord Alarcos, look me
 Straight in the face. He quails not.

Alar. O my soul,
 Is this the being for whose love I've pledged
 Even thy forfeit!

Sol. Alarcos, dear Alarcos,
 Look not so stern! I'm mad, yes, yes, my life
 Upon thy truth—I know thou'rt true; he said
 It rested but with thee—I said it not,
 Nor thought it.

Alar. Lady!

Sol. Not that voice!—

Alar. I'll know

Thy thought—the King hath spoken?

Sol. Words of joy
 And madness. With thyself alone he says
 It rests.

Alar. Nor said he more?

Sol. It had found me deaf,
For he touched hearings quick.

Alar. Thy faith in me
Hath gone.

Sol. I'll doubt our shrined miracles
Before I doubt Alarcos.

Alar. He'll believe thee,
For at this moment he has much to endure
And that he could not.

Sol. And yet I must choose
This time to vex thee. O, I am the curse
And blight of the existence, which to bless
Is all my thought! Alarcos, dear Alarcos,
I pray thee pardon me. I am so wretched:
This fell suspense is like a frightful dream
Wherein we fall from heights, yet never reach
The bottomless abyss. It wastes my spirit,
Wears down my life, gnaws ever at my heart,
Makes my brain quick, when others are asleep,
And dull when theirs is active. O, Alarcos,
I could lie down and die.

Alar. (advancing in soliloquy.) Asleep, awake,
In dreams, and in the musing moods that wait
On unfulfilled purposes, I've done it;
And thought upon it afterwards, nor shrunk
From the fell retrospect.

Sol. He's wrapped in thought,
Indeed his glance was wild when first he entered,
And his speech lacked completeness.

Alar. How is it then,
The body that should be the viler part,
And made for servile uses, should rebel
'Gainst the mind's mandate, and should hold its aid
Aloof from our adventure? Why the sin
Is in the thought, not in the deed; 'tis not
The body pays the penalty, the soul
Must clear that awful scot. What palls my arm?
It is not pity; trumpet-tongued ambition
Stifles her plaintive voice; it is not love,
For that inspires the blow! Art thou Solisa?

Sol. I am that luckless maiden whom you love.

Alar. You could lie down and die. Who speaks of death?

There is no absolution for self-murder.

Why 'tis the greater sin of the two. There is

More peril in't. What, sleep upon your post

Because you are wearied? No, we must spy on

And watch occasions. Even now they are ripe.

I feel a turbulent throbbing at my heart

Will end in action: for these spiritual tumults

Herald great deeds.

Sol. It is the church's scheme

Ever to lengthen suits.

Alar. The church?

Sol. Ossuna

Leans much to Rome.

Alar. And how concerns us that?

Sol. His Grace spoke to the Bishop—you must know?

Alar. Ah yes! his Grace—the church, it is our friend.

And truly should be so. It gave our griefs

And it should bear their balm.

Sol. Hast pardoned me

That I was querulous? But lovers crossed

Wrangle with those that love them, as it were,

To spite affection.

Alar. We are bound together

As the twin powers of the storm. Very love

Now makes me callous. The great bond is sealed.

Look bright; if gloomy, mortgage future bliss

For present comfort. Trust me 'tis good 'surance.

I'll to the King. [*Exeunt both.*]

SCENE III.

A Street in Burgos.

(*Enter the COUNT of LEON followed by ORAN.*)

Leon. He has been sighing like a Sybarite

These six weeks past, and now he sends to me

To hire my bravo. Well, that smacks of manhood.

He'll pierce at least one heart, if not the right one.
 Murder and marriage! which the greater crime
 A schoolman may decide. All arts exhausted
 His death alone remains. A clumsy course.
 I care not. Truth, I hate this same Alarcos;
 I think it is the colour of his eyes,
 But I do hate him; and the royal ear
 Lists coldly to me since this same return.
 The King leans wholly on him. Sirrah Moor,
 All is prepared?

Oran. And prompt.

Leon. 'Tis well; no boggling.

Let it be cleanly done.

Oran. A stab or two,

And the Arlanzon's wave shall know the rest.

Leon. I'll have to kibe his heels at court, if you fail.

Oran. There is no fear. We have the choicest spirits
 In Burgos.

Leon. Goodly gentlemen! you wait
 Their presence?

Oran. Here anon.

Leon. Good night, dusk infidel,
 They'll take me for an Alguazil. At home
 Your news will reach me.

[*Exit LEON.*]

Oran. And were all your throats cut,
 I would not weep. O, Allah, let them spend
 Their blood upon themselves! My life he shielded,
 And now exacts one at my hands; we're quits
 When this is closed. That thought will grace a deed
 Otherwise graceless. I would break the chain
 That binds me to this man. His callous eye
 Repels devotion, while his reckless vein
 Demands prompt sacrifice. Now is't wise this?
 Methinks 'twere wise to touch the humblest heart
 Of those that serve us? In maturest plans
 There lacks that finish, which alone can flow
 From zealous instruments. But here are some
 That have no hearts to touch.

(Enter Four BRAVOS.)

How now, good Senors,—
 I cannot call them comrades; you're exact,
 As doubtless ye are brave. You know your duty?
1st Bravo. And will perform it or my name is changed;
 And I'm not Gusman Jaca.

Oran. You well know
 The arm you cross is potent?

2d Bravo. All the steel
 Of Calatrava's knights shall not protect it.

3d Bravo. And all the knights to boot.

4th Bravo. A river business.

Oran. The safest sepulchre.

4th Bravo. A burial ground
 Of which we are the priests, and take our fees;
 I never cross a stream, but I do feel
 A sense of property.

Oran. You know the signal:
 And when I boast I've friends, they may appear
 To prove I am no braggart.

1st Bravo. To our posts.

It shall be cleanly done, and brief.

2d Bravo. No oaths,
 No swagger.

3d Bravo. Not a word; but all as pleasant
 As we were nobles like himself.

4th Bravo. 'Tis true, sir;
 You deal with gentlemen.

[Exeunt BRAVOS.]

(Enter COUNT ALARCOS.)

Alar. The moon's a sluggard,
 I think, to-night. How now, the Moor that dodged
 My steps at vespers. Hem! I like not this.
 Friends beneath cloaks; they're wanted. Save you, Sir?

Oran. And you, Sir?

Alar. Not the first time we have met,
 Or I've no eye for lurkers.

Oran. I have tasted
 Our common heritage, the air, to-day;

And if the self-same beam warmed both our bloods,
What then?

Alar. Why nothing ; but the sun has set,
And honest men should seek their hearths.

Oran. I wait
My friends.

(The BRAVOS rush in, and assault COUNT ALARCOS, who, dropping his Cloak, shows his Sword already drawn, and keeps them at bay).

Alar. So, so ! who plays with prince's blood ?
No sport for varlets. Thus and thus, I'll teach ye,
To know your station.

1st Bravo. Ah !

2d Bravo. Away !

3d Bravo. Fly, fly !

4th Bravo. No place for quiet men.
[The BRAVOS run off.

Alar. A little breath
Is all they have cost me, tho' their blood has stained
My damask blade. And still the Moor ! What ho !
Why flyest not like thy mates ?

Oran. Because I wait
To fight.

Alar. Rash caitiff ! knowest thou who I am ?

Oran. One whom I heard was brave, and now has proved it.

Alar. Am I thy foe ?

Oran. No more than all thy race.

Alar. Go, save thy life.

Oran. Look to thine own, proud Lord.

Alar. Perdition catch thy base-born insolence.

(They fight ; after a long and severe encounter, ALARCOS disarms ORAN, who falls wounded).

Oran. Be brief, dispatch me.

Alar. Not a word for mercy ?

Oran. Why shouldst thou give it ?

Alar. 'Tis not merited,

Yet might be gained. Who set thee on to this ?
My sword is at thy throat. Give me his name
And thine shall live.

Oran. I cannot.

Alar. What, is life
So light a boon ! It hangs upon this point.
Bold Moor, is't then thy love to him who fees thee,
Makes thee so faithful ?

Oran. No ; I hate him.

Alar. What
Restrains thee then ?

Oran. The feeling that restrained
My arm from joining stabbers—Honour.

Alar. Humph !
An overseer of stabbers for some ducats.
And is that honour ?

Oran. Once he screened my life,
And this was my return.

Alar. What if I spare
Thy life even now ? Wilt thou accord to me
The same devotion ?

Oran. Yea ; the life thou givest
Thou shouldst command.

Alar. If I too have a foe
Crossing my path and blighting all my life ?

Oran. This sword should strive to reach him.

Alar. Him ! thy bond
Shall know no sex or nation. Limitless
Shall be thy pledge. I'll claim from thee a life
For that I spare. How now, wilt live ?

Oran. To pay
A life for that now spared.

Alar. Swear to thy truth ;
Swear by Mahound, and swear by all thy gods,
If thou hast any ; swear it by the stars,
In which we all believe ; and by thy hopes
Of thy false paradise ; swear it by thy soul,
And by thy sword !

Oran. I swear.

Alar. Arise and live.

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Interior of a Posada frequented by BRAVOS, in an obscure quarter of Burgos. FLIX at the fire frying eggs. Men seated at small Tables drinking; others lying on Benches. At the side, but in the front of the Scene, some Beggars squatted on the ground, thrumming a Mandolin; a Gipsy Girl dancing.

A Bravo. Come, mother, dost take us for Saracens? I say we are true Christians, and so must drink wine.

Another Bravo. Mother Flix is sour to-night. Keep the evil eye from the olla!

A 3d Bravo (advancing to her). Thou beauty of Burgos, what are dimples unless seen? Smile! wench.

Flix. A frying egg will not wait for the King of Cordova.

1st Bravo. Will have her way. Graus knows a pretty wife's worth. A handsome hostess is bad for the guest's purse.

A Bravo (rising). Good companions make good company. Graus, Graus! another flagon.

Another Bravo. Of the right Catalan.

3d Bravo. Nay, for my omelette.

Flix. Hungry men think the cook lazy.

(Enter GRAUS with a Flagon of Wine.)

1st Bravo. 'Tis mine.

2d Bravo. No, mine.

1st *Bravo*. We'll share.

2d *Bravo*. No, each man his own beaker; he who shares has the worst half.

3d *Bravo* (to FLIX, who brings the Omelette). An egg and to bed.

Graus. Who drinks, first chinks.

1st *Bravo*. The debtor is stoned every day. There will be water-work to-morrow, and that will wash it out. You know me?

Graus. In a long journey and a small inn, one knows one's company.

2d *Bravo*. Come, I'll give, but I won't share. Fill up.

Graus. That's liberal; my way; full measure but prompt pezos; I loathe your niggards.

1st *Bravo*. As the little tailor of Campillo said, who worked for nothing, and found thread.

(To the other *Bravo*.) Nay, I'll not refuse; we know each other.

2d *Bravo*. We've seen the stars together.

An Old Man. Burgos is not what it was.

A 5th *Bravo* (waking.) Sleep ends and supper begins. The olla—the olla—Mother Flix, (shaking a purse) there's the dinner bell.

2d *Bravo*. That will bring courses.

1st *Bravo*. An ass covered with gold has more respect than a horse with a pack-saddle.

5th *Bravo*. How for that ass?

2d *Bravo*. Nay, the sheep should have his belly full who quarrels with his mate.

5th *Bravo*. But how for that ass?

A *Friar* (advancing.) Peace be with ye, brethren! A meal in God's name.

5th *Bravo*. Who asks in God's name, asks for two. But how for that ass?

Flix (bringing the Olla.) Nay, an ye must brawl, go fight the Moors. 'Tis a peaceable house, and we sleep quiet o' nights.

5th *Bravo*. Am I an ass?

Flix. He is an ass who talks when he might eat.

5th *Bravo*. A Secadon sausage! Come, mother, I'm all

peace—thou'rt a rare hand. Ass in thy teeth, comrade, and no more on't.

1st Bravo. When I will not, two cannot quarrel.

Old Man. Every thing is changed for the worse.

Friar. For the love of St. Jago, Senors; for the love of St. Jago!

5th Bravo. When it pleases not God, the saint can do little.

2d Bravo. Nay, supper for all, and drink's the best meat.

Some have sung for it, some danced. There is no fishing for trout in dry breeches. You shall preach.

Friar. Benedicite, brethren—

1st Bravo. Nay, no Latin, for the devil's not here.

2d Bravo. And prithee let it be as full of meat as an egg; for we, who do many deeds, love not many words.

Friar. Thou shalt not steal.

1st Bravo. He blasphemeth.

Friar. But what is theft?

2d Bravo. Ay! there it is.

Friar. The tailor he steals the cloth, and the miller he steals the meal; is either a thief? 'tis the way of trade. But what if our trade be to steal? Why then our work is to cut purses; to cut purses is to follow our business; and to follow our business is to obey the King; and so thieving is no theft. And that's probatum, and so amen.

5th Bravo. Shall put thy spoon in the olla for that.

2d Bravo. And drink this health to our honest fraternity.

Old Man. I have heard sermons by the hour; this is brief; every thing falls off.

(*Enter a PERSONAGE masked and cloaked.*)

1st Bravo (to his Companions.) See'st yon mask?

2d Bravo. 'Tis strange.

Graus (to FLIX.) Who is this?

Flix. The fool wonders, the wise man asks. Must have no masks here.

Graus. An obedient wife commands her husband. Business with a stranger, title enough. (*Advancing and addressing the Mask.*) Most noble Senor Mask.

The Unknown. Well, fellow!

Graus. Hem; as it may be. D'ye see, most noble Senor Mask, that 'tis an orderly house this, frequented by certain honest gentlemen, that take their siesta, and eat a fried egg after their day's work, and so are not ashamed to show their faces. Ahem!

The Un. As in truth I am in such villainous company.

Graus. Wheugh! but 'tis not the first ill word that brings a blow. Wouldst sup indifferently well here at a moderate rate, we are thy servants. My Flix hath reputation at the frying-pan, and my wine hath made lips smack; but here, Senor, faces must be uncovered.

The Un. Poh! poh!

Graus. Nay, then, I will send some to you shall gain softer words.

1st Bravo. Why, what's this.

2d Bravo. Our host is an honest man, and has friends.

5th Bravo. Let me finish my olla, and I will discourse with him.

The Un. Courage is fire, and bullying is smoke. I am here on business, and with you all.

1st Bravo. Carraho! and who's this?

The Un. One who knows you, though you know not him. One whom you have never seen, yet all fear. And who walks at night, and where he likes.

2d Bravo. The devil himself!

The Un. It may be so.

2d Bravo. Sit by me, Friar, and speak Latin.

The Un. There is a man missing in Burgos, and I will know where he is.

Old Man. There were many men missing in my time.

The Un. Dead or alive, I care not—but land or water, river or turf, I will know where the body is stowed. See (*shaking a purse*) here is eno' to point all the poignards of the city. You shall have it to drink his health.

A Bravo. How call you him?

The Un. Oran, the Moor.

1st Bravo (*jumping from his seat and approaching the Stranger*). My name is Guzman Jaca; my hand was in that business.

The Un. With the Moor and three of your comrades?

1st Bravo. The same.

The Un. And how came your quarry to fly next day?

1st Bravo. Very true; 'twas a bad business for all of us.

I fought like a lion; see my arm is still bound up: but he had advice of our visit; and no sooner had we saluted him, than there suddenly appeared a goodly company of twelve serving-men, or say twelve to fifteen—

The Un. You lie; he walked alone.

1st Bravo. Very true; and if I am forced to speak the whole truth, it was thus. I fought like a lion; see my arm is still bound up; but I was not quite his match alone, for I had let blood the day before, and my comrades were taken with a panic, and so left me in the lurch. And now you have it all.

The Un. And Oran?

1st Bravo. He fled at once.

The Un. Come, come, Oran did not fly.

1st Bravo. Very true. We left him alone with the Count, and now you have it all.

The Un. Had he slain him, the body would have been found.

1st Bravo. Very true. That's the difference between us professional performers, and you mere amateurs; we never leave the bodies.

The Un. And you can tell me nothing of him?

1st Bravo. No, but I engage to finish the Count any night you like now, for I have found out his lure.

The Un. How's that?

1st Bravo. Every evening, about an hour after sunset, he enters by a private way the citadel.

The Un. Hah! What more?

1st Bravo. He is staggled; there is a game playing but what I know not.

The Un. Your name is Guzman Jaca?

1st Bravo. The same.

The Un. Honest fellow! There's gold for you. You know nothing of Oran?

1st Bravo. May be he has crawled to some place wounded.

The Un. To die like a bird. Look after him. If I wish

more, I know where to find you. What ho, Master Host! I cannot wait to try your mistress's art to-night; but here's my scot for our next supper.

[*Exit the UNKNOWN.*]

SCENE II.

A Chamber in the Palace of Alarcos.

The COUNTESS and SIDONIA.

Sid. Lady, you're moved; nay, 'twas an idle word.

Coun. But was it true?

Sid. And yet might little mean.

Coun. That I should live to doubt!

Sid. But do not doubt;
Forget it, Lady. You should know him well;
Nay, do not credit it.

Coun. He's very changed.
I would not own, no, not believe that change,
I've given it every gloss that might confirm
My sinking heart. Time and your tale agree—
Alas! 'tis true.

Sid. I hope not, still believe
It is not true. Would that I had not spoken?
It was unguarded prate.

Coun. You have done me service:
Condemned, the headsman is no enemy,
But closes suffering.

Sid. Yet a bitter doom
To torture those you'd bless. I have a thought.
What if this eve you visit this same spot,
That shrouds these meetings? If he's wanting then,
The rest might prove as false.

Coun. He will be there,
I feel he will be there.

Sid. We should not think so,
Until our eyes defeat our hopes.

Coun. O Burgos,
My heart misgave me when I saw thy walls!

To doubt is madness, yet 'tis not despair,
And that may be my lot.

Sid. The palace gardens
Are closed, except to master-keys. Here's one;
My office gives it me, and it can count
Few brethren. You will be alone.

Coun. Alas!
I dare not hope so.

Sid. Well, well, think of this—
Yet take the key.

Coun. O that it would unlock
The heart now closed to me! To watch his wants
Was once my being. Shall I prove the spy
Of joys I may not share? I will not take
That fatal key.

Sid. 'Tis well; I pray you, pardon
My ill-timed zeal.

Coun. Indeed I should be grateful
That one should wish to serve me. Can it be?
'Tis not two months, two little, little months,
You crossed this threshold first—Ah! gentle Sir,
And we were all so gay! What have I done?
What is all this? so sudden and so strange?
It is not true, I feel it is not true;
'Tis factious care that clouds his brow, and calls
For all this timed absence. His brain's busy
With the state—Is't not so? I prithee speak,
And say you think it.

Sid. You should know him well;
And if you deem it so, why I should deem
The inference just.

Coun. Yet if he were not there,
How happy I should sleep! there is no peril;
The garden's near; and is there shame? 'Tis love
Makes me a lawful spy. He'll not be there,
And then there is no prying.

Sid. Near at hand,
Crossing the way that bounds your palace court,
There is a private portal.

Coun. If I go,

He will not miss me. Ah, I would he might!
 So very near; no, no, I cannot go;
 And yet I'll take the key. [*takes the key.*
 Would thou couldst speak,
 Thou little instrument, and tell me all
 The secrets of thy office! My heart beats;
 'Tis my first enterprise—I would it were
 To do him service. No, I cannot go;
 Farewell, kind Sir; indeed I am so troubled,
 I must retire. [*Exit COUNTESS.*

Sid. Thy virtue makes me vile;
 And what should move my heart inflames my soul.
 O marvellous world, wherein I play the villain
 From very love of excellence! But for him,
 I'd be the rival of her stainless thoughts
 And mate her purity—Hah!

(*Enter ORAN.*)

Oran. My noble Lord!

Sid. The Moor!

Oran. Your servant.

Sid. Here! 'tis passing strange,
 How's this?

Oran. The accident of war, my Lord.
 I am a prisoner.

Sid. But at large, it seems.
 You have betrayed me?

Oran. Had I chosen that,
 I had been free and you not here. I fought
 And fell in single fight. Why spared I know not,
 But that the lion's generous.

Sid. Will you prove
 Your faith?

Oran. Nay, doubt it not.

Sid. You still can aid me.

Oran. I am no traitor, and my friends shall find
 I am not wanting.

Sid. Quit these liberal walls
 Where you're not watched. In brief, I've coined a tale
 Has touched the Countess to the quick. She seeks,

Alone or scantily tended, even now,
 The Palace gardens ; eager to discover
 A faithless husband, where she'll chance to find
 One more devout. My steeds and servants wait
 At the right post ; my distant castle soon
 Shall hold this peerless wife. Your resolute spirit
 May aid me much. How say you, is it well
 That we have met ?

Oran. Right well. I will embark.

Most heartily in this.

Sid. With me at once.

Oran. At once ?

Sid. No faltering. You have learned and know
 Too much to spare you from my sight, good *Oran.*
 With me at once.

Oran. 'Tis urgent ; well at once
 And I will do good service, or I'll die.
 For what is life unless to aid the life
 Has aided thine ?

Sid. On then—with me no eye
 Will look with jealousy upon thy step.

[*Exeunt both.*]

SCENE III.

A retired spot in the gardens of the Palace.

(*Enter the COUNTESS.*)

Coun. Is't guilt, that I thus tremble ? Why should I
 Feel like a sinner ? I'll not dare to meet
 His flashing eye. O, with what scorn, what hate,
 His lightning glance will wither me. Away,
 I will away. I care not whom he meets.
 What if he love me not, he shall not loathe
 The form he once embraced. I'll be content
 To live upon the past, and dream again
 It may return. Alas ! were I the false one,
 I could not feel more humbled. Ah, he comes !

I'll lie, I'll vow I'm vile, that I came here
To meet another, anything but that
I dared to doubt him. What, my Lord Sidonia!

[Enter SIDONIA.]

Sid. Thy servant and thy friend. Ah! gentle Lady,
I deemed this unused scene and ill-timed hour
Might render solace welcome. He'll not come;
He crossed the mountains, ere the set of sun,
Towards Briviesca.

Coun. Holy Virgin, thanks!

Home, home!

Sid. And can a hearth neglected cause
Such raptures?

Coun. I, and only I, neglect it;
My cheek is fire, that I should ever dare
To do this stealthy deed.

Sid. And yet I feel
I could do one as secret and more bold.
A moment, Lady, do not turn away
With that cold look.

Coun. My children wait me, Sir.
Yet I would thank you, for you meant me kindness.

Sid. And mean it yet. Ah! beauteous Florimonde,
It is the twilight hour, when hearts are soft,
And mine is like the quivering light of eve;
I love thee!

Coun. And for this I'm here, and he,
He is not false! O happiness!

Sid. Sweet Lady—

Coun. My Lord Sidonia, I can pardon thee—
I am so joyful.

Sid. Nay then.

Coun. Unhand me, Sir!

Sid. But to embrace this delicate waist. Thou art mine:
I've sighed and thou hast spurned. What is not yielded
In war we capture. Ere a flying hour,
Thy hated Burgos vanishes. That voice—
What, must I stifle it, who fain would listen
For ever to its song? In vain thy cry—
For none are here but mine.

(Enter ORAN.)

Oran. Turn, robber, turn—

Sid. Ah! treason in the camp! Thus to thy heart.

[*They fight. ORAN beats off SIDONIA, they leave the scene fighting; the COUNTESS swoons.*]

(*Enter a Procession with lighted torches, attending the Infanta SOLISA from Mass.*)

1st Ush. A woman!

2d Ush. Does she live?

Sol. What stops our course?

[*The Train ranging themselves on each side, the INFANTA approaches the COUNTESS.*]

Sol. Most strange and lovely vision! Does she breathe?

I'll not believe 'tis death. Her hand is cold,

And her brow damp; Griselda, Julia, maidens,

Hither, and yet stand off; give her free air.

How shall we bear her home? Now, good Lorenzo,

You, and Sir Miguel, raise her; gently, gently.

Still gently, Sirs. By heavens, the fairest face

I yet did gaze on! Some one here should know her;

'Tis one that must be known. That's well; relieve

That kerchief from her neck—mind not our state;

I'll by her side—a swoon, methinks; no more,

Let's hope and pray!

[*They raise the body of the COUNTESS, and bear her away.*]

(Enter COUNT OF LEON.)

Leon. I'll fathom this same mystery,

If there be wit in Burgos. I have heard,

Before I knew the Court, old Nunez Leon

Whisper strange things—and what if they prove true?

It is not exile twice would cure that scar.

I'll reach him yet. 'Tis likely he may pass

This way; 'tis lonely, and well suits a step

Would not be noticed. Ha! a man approaches;

I'll stand awhile aside.

(Re-enter ORAN.)

Oran. Gone, is she gone!
 Yet safe I feel. O Allah! thou art great!
 The arm she bound, and tended with that glance
 Of sweet solicitude, has saved her life,
 And more than life. The dark and reckless villains!
 O! I could curse them, but my heart is soft
 With holy triumph. I'm no more an outcast.
 And when she calls me, I'd not change my lot
 To be an Emir. In their hall to-night
 There will be joy, and Oran will have smiles.
 This house has knit me to their fate by ties
 Stronger than gyves of iron.

Leon. Do I see
 The man I seek? Oran!

[ORAN turns, and recognizing LEON, rushes and seizes him.]

Oran. Incarnate fiend.

Give her me, give her me!

Leon. Off, ruffian, off!

Oran. I have thee and I'll hold thee. If I spare
 Thy damned life, and do not dash thee down,
 And trample on thee, fiend, it is because
 Thou art the gaoler of a pearl of price
 I cannot gain without thee. Now, where is she?
 Now by thy life!

Leon. Why, thou, outrageous Moor,
 Hast broken thy false prophet's rule, and so
 Fell into unused drink, that thus thou darest
 To flout me with thy cloudy menaces?
 What mean'st thou, Sir? And what have I withheld
 From thy vile touch? By heaven, I pass my days
 In seeking thy dusk corpse, I deemed well drilled
 Ere this, but it awaits my vengeance.

Oran. Boy!
 Licentious boy! Where is she? Now, by Allah!
 This poignard to thy heart, unless thou tell'st me.

Leon. Whom dost thou mean?

Oran. Thy comrade and thy crew;
 They all have fled. I left the Countess here.
 She's gone. Thou fill'st her place.

Leon. What Countess? Speak.

Oran. The Count Alarcos' wife.

Leon. The Count Alarcos!

I'd be right glad to see him; but his wife
Concerns the Lord Sidonia. If he have played
Some pranks here 'tis a fool, and he has marred
More than he'll ever make. My time's worth gems;
My knightly word, dusk Moor, I tell thee truth.
I will forget these jests, but we must meet
This night at my palace.

Oran. I'll see her first.

[Exit ORAN.]

Leon. Is it the Carnival? what mummery's this?

What have I heard? One thing alone is clear;

We must be rid of Oran.

SCENE IV.

A Chamber in the Palace. The COUNTESS ALARCOS lying on a Couch, the INFANTA kneeling at her side; MAIDENS grouped around. A PHYSICIAN and the PAGE.

Sol. Didst ever see so fair a skin? Her bodice
Should still be loosened. Bring the Moorish water—
Griselda, you. They are the longest lashes!
They hang upon her cheek. Doctor, there's warmth;
The blood returns?

Phys. But slowly.

Sol. Beauteous creature!

She seems an angel fallen from some star.
'Twas well we passed. Untie that kerchief, Julia;
Teresa, wave the fan. There seems a glow
Upon her cheek, that but a moment since
Was like a sculptured saint's.

Phys. She breathes.

Sol. Hush, hush!

Coun. And what is this? where am I?

Sol. With thy friends.

Coun. It is not home.

Sol. If kindness make a home,
Believe it such.

[*The PHYSICIAN signifies silence.*

Nay lady, not a word,

Those lips must now be closed. I've seen such eyes
In pictures, girls.

Phys. Methinks she'll sleep.

Sol. 'Tis well.

Maidens away. I'll be her nurse—and doctor
Remain within.

[*Exeunt PHYSICIAN and MAIDENS.*

Know you this beauteous dame?

Page. I have heard minstrels tell that fays are found
In lonely places.

Sol. Well, she's magical.

She draws me charmlike to her. Vanish imp,
And see our chambers still. [*Exit PAGE.*

It is the hour

Alarcos should be here. Ah happy hour,
That custom only makes more strangely sweet!
His brow has lost its cloud. The bar's removed
To our felicity; time makes amends
To patient sufferers.

(*Enter COUNT ALARCOS.*)

Hush, my own love, hush!

[*SOLISA takes his hand and leads him aside.*

So strange an incident! the fairest lady!
Found in our gardens; it would seem a swoon;
Myself then passing; hither we have brought her;
She is so beautiful, you'll almost deem
She bears some charmed life. You know that fays
Are found in lonely places.

Alar. In thy garden!

Indeed 'tis strange! The Virgin guard thee, love.
I am right glad I'm here. Alone to tend her,
'Tis scarcely wise.

Sol. I think, when she recovers,
She'll wave her wings and fly.

Alar. Nay, for one glance!

In truth you paint her bright.

Sol. E'en now she sleeps.

Tread lightly love ; I'll lead you.

[*SOLISA cautiously leads ALARCOS to the couch ; as they approach it, the COUNTESS opens her eyes and shrieks.*

Coun. Ah ! 'tis true,
Alarcos ! *[relapses into a swoon.*

Alar. Florimonde !

Sol. Who is this lady ?

Alar. It is my wife.

Sol. *(flings away his arm and rushes forward.)*

—— Not mad !

Virgins and Saints be merciful—not mad !

O spare my brain one moment—'tis his wife.

I'm lost—she is too fair. The secret's out
Of sick delays. He's feigned—he has but feigned.

(rushing to ALARCOS.)

Is that thy wife ? and I—and what am I ?

A trifled toy, a humoured instrument ?

To guide with glozing words, vilely cajole

With petty perjuries ? Is that thy wife ?

Thou saidst she was not fair, thou didst not love her :

Thou lied'st. O anguish, anguish !

Alar. By the cross,
My soul is pure to thee. I'm wildered quite.
How came she here ?

Sol. As she shall ne'er return.

Now Count Alarcos, by the cross thou swearest

Thy faith is true to me.

Alar. Ay, by the cross.

Sol. Give me thy dagger.

Alar. Not that hand or mine.

Sol. Is this thy passion ! *(takes his dagger)*

Thus I gain the heart

I should despise. *(rushes to the couch.)*

Coun. What's this I see ?

Alar. *(seizing the INFANTA'S upraised arm.)*

A dream—

A horrid dream, yet but a dream.

(End of the Fourth Act.)

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Exterior of the Castle of Alarcos in the valley of Arlanzon.

(Enter the COUNTESS.)

Coun. I would recall the days gone by, and live
 A moment in the past; if but to fly
 The dreary present pressing on my brain,
 Woe's omened harbinger. In exiled love
 The scene he drew so fair! Ye castled crags,
 The sunbeam plays on your embattled cliffs,
 And softens your stern visage, as his love
 Softened our early sorrows. But my sun
 Has set for ever! Once we talked of cares
 And deemed that we were sad. Men fancy sorrows
 Until time brings the substance of despair,
 And then their griefs are shadows. Give me exile!
 It brought me love. Ah! days of gentle joy,
 When pastime only parted us, and he
 Returned with tales to make our children stare;
 Or called my lute, while, round my waist entwined,
 His hand kept chorus to my lay. No more!
 O, we were happier than the happy birds;
 And sweeter were our lives than the sweet flowers;
 The stars were not more tranquil in their course,
 Yet not more bright! The fountains in their play
 Did most resemble us, that as they flow
 Still sparkle!

(Enter ORAN.)

Oran, I am very sad!

Oran. Cheer up, sweet lady, for the God of all
Will guard the innocent.

Coun. Think you he'll come
To visit us? Methinks he'll never come.

Oran. He's but four leagues away. This vicinage
Argues a frequent presence.

Coun. But three nights—
Have only three nights past? It is an epoch
Distant and dim with passion. There are seasons
Feelings crowd on so, time not flies but staggers;
And memory poises on her burthened plumes
To gloat upon her prey. Spoke he of coming?

Oran. His words were scant and wild, and yet he murmured
That I should see him.

Coun. I've not seen him since
That fatal night, yet even that glance of terror—
I'd hail it now. O Oran, Oran, think you
He ever more will love me? Can I do
Aught to regain his love? They say your people
Are learned in these questions. Once I thought
There was no spell like duty—that devotion
Would bulwark love for ever. Now, I'd distil
Philtres, converse with moonlit hags, defile
My soul with talismans, bow down to spirits,
And frequent accused places, all, yea all—
I'd forfeit all—but to regain his love.

Oran. There is a cloud now rising in the west,
In shape a hand, and scarcely would it's grasp
Exceed mine own, it is so small; a spot,
A speck; see now again its colour flits!
A lurid tint; they call it on our coast
"The hand of God"; for when its finger rises
From out the horizon, there are storms abroad
And awful judgments.

Coun. Ah! it beckons me.

Oran. Lady!

Coun. Yes, yes, see now the finger moves
And points to me. I feel it on my spirit.

Oran. Methinks it points to me—

Coun. To both of us.

It may be so. And what would it portend?

My heart's grown strangely calm. If there be chance

Of storms, my children should be safe. Let's home.

SCENE II.

An illuminated hall in the Royal Palace at Burgos ; in the background DANCERS.

Groups of GUESTS passing.

1st Guest. Radiant!

2d Guest. Recalls old days.

3d Guest. The Queen herself

Ne'er revelled it so high!

4th Guest. The Infanta beams

Like some bright star!

5th Guest. And brighter for the cloud

A moment screened her.

6th Guest. Is it true 'tis over

Between the Count Sidonia and the Lara?

1st Guest. A musty tale. The fair Alarcos wins him.

Where's she to-night?

2d Guest. All on the watch to view

Her entrance to our world.

3d Guest. The Count is here.

4th Guest. Where?

3d Guest. With the King; at least a moment since.

2d Guest. They say she's ravishing.

4th Guest. Beyond belief!

3d Guest. The King affects him much.

5th Guest. He's all in all.

6th Guest. Yon Knight of Calatrava, who is he?

1st Guest. Young Mendola.

2d Guest. What he so rich?

1st Guest. The same.

2d Guest. The Lara smiles on him.

1st Guest. No worthier quarry!

3d Guest. Who has the vacant Mastership?

4th Guest. I'll back

The Count of Leon.

3d Guest. Likely; he stands well

With the Lord Admiral. [*They move away.*]

(*The Counts of SIDONIA and LEON come forward.*)

Leon. Doubt as you like,

Credulity will come, and in good season.

Sid. She is not here, that would confirm your tale.

Leon. 'Tis history, my Sidonia. Strange events

Have happened, stranger come.

Sid. I'll not believe it.

And favoured by the King! What can it mean?

Leon. What no one dares to say.

Sid. A clear divorce.

O that accursed garden! But for that—

Leon. 'Twas not my counsel. Now I'd give a purse

To wash good Oran in Arlanzon's wave;

The dusk dog needs a cleansing.

Sid. Hush! here comes

Alarcos, and the King.

(*They retire: the KING and COUNT ALARCOS advance.*)

King. Solisa looks

A Queen.

Alar. The mirror of her earliest youth

Ne'er shadowed her so fair!

King. I am young again

Myself to-night. It quickens my old blood

To see my nobles round me. This goes well.

'Tis courts like these that make a King feel proud.

Thy future subjects, cousin.

Alar. Gracious Sire,

I would be one.

King. Our past seclusion lends

A lustre to this revel.

(*The KING approaches the COUNT of LEON; SOLISA advances to ALARCOS.*)

Sol. Why art thou grave?
 I came to bid thee smile. In truth, to-night
 I feel a lightness of the heart to me
 Hath long been strange.

Alar. 'Tis passion makes me grave.
 I muse upon thy beauty. Thus I'd read
 My oppressed spirit, for in truth these sounds
 Jar on my humour.

Sol. Now my brain is vivid
 With wild and blissful images. Canst guess
 What laughing thought unbidden, but resistless,
 Plays o'er my mind to-night? Thou canst not guess:
 Meseems it is our bridal night.

Alar. Thy fancy
 Outruns the truth but scantily.

Sol. Not a breath.
 Our long-vexed destinies—even now their streams
 Blend in one tide. It is the hour, Alarcos:
 There is a spirit whispering in my ear,
 The hour is come. I would I were a man
 But for a rapid hour. Should I rest here,
 Prattling with gladsome revellers, when time,
 Steered by my hand, might bring me to a port
 I long had sighed to enter? But, alas!
 These are a woman's thoughts.

Alar. And yet I share them.

Sol. Why not to-night? Now, when our hearts are high,
 Our fancies glowing, pulses fit for kings,
 And the whole frame and spirit of the man
 Prepared for daring deeds?

Alar. And were it done—
 Why then 'twere not to do.

Sol. The mind grows dull
 Dwelling on method of its deeds too long.
 Our schemes should brood as gradual as the storm;
 Their acting should be lightning. How far is't?

Alar. An hour.

Sol. Why it wants two to midnight yet.
 O could I see thee but re-enter here,
 Ere yet the midnight clock strikes on my heart

The languish of new hours—I'd not ask thee
 Why I had missed the mien, that draws to it ever
 My constant glance. There'd need no speech between us ;
 For I should meet—my husband.

Alar. 'Tis the burthen
 Of this unfill'd doom weighs on my spirit.
 Why am I here? My heart and face but mar
 This festive hall. To-night, why not to-night?
 The night will soon have past ; then 'twill be done.
 We'll meet again to-night. [*Exit* ALARCOS.]

SCENE III.

*A Hall in the Castle of ALARCOS ; in the back of the Scene
 a door leading to another Apartment.*

Oran. Reveal the future, lightnings! Then I'd hail
 That arrowy flash. O darker than the storm,
 Cowed as the beasts now crouching in their caves,
 Is my sad soul. Impending o'er this house,
 I feel some bursting fate, my doomed arm
 In vain would ward.

(*Enter a MAN AT ARMS.*)

How now, hast left thy post?

Man. O worthy Castellan, the lightnings play
 Upon our turrets that no human step
 Can keep the watch. Each forky flash seems missioned
 To scath our roof, and the whole platform flows
 With a blue sea of flame.

Oran. It is thy post.
 No peril clears desertion. To thy post.
 Mark me, my step will be as prompt as thine ;
 I will relieve thee. [*Exit* MAN AT ARMS.]

Let the mischievous fire

Wither this head. O Allah! grant no fate
 More dire awaits me.

(*Enter the COUNT ALARCOS.*)

Hah! the Count! My Lord,

In such a night!

Alar. A night that's not so wild

As this tempestuous breath. How is she, Oran?

Oran. Well.

Alar. Ever well.

Oran. The children——

Alar. Wine, I'm wearied.

The lightning scared my horse; he's galled my arm.

Get me some wine. *[Exit ORAN.]*

The storm was not to stop me.

The mind intent construes each natural act

To a personal bias, and so catches judgments

In every common course. In truth the flash,

Though it seemed opening hell, was not so dreadful

As that wild glaring hall.

(Re-enter ORAN with a goblet and flagon.)

Ah! this re-mans me!

I think the storm has lulled. Another cup.

Go see, good Oran, how the tempest speeds.

[Exit ORAN.]

An hour ago I did not dare to think

I'd drink wine more.

(Re-enter ORAN.)

Oran. The storm indeed has lulled

As by a miracle; the sky is clear,

There's not a breath of air; and from the turret

I heard the bell of Huelgas.

Alar. Then 'twas nothing.

My spirit vaults! Oran, thou dost remember

The night that we first met?

Oran. 'Tis graven deep

Upon my heart.

Alar. I think thou lovest me, Oran?

Oran. And all thy house.

Alar. Nay thou shalt love but me.

I'll no divisions in the hearts that are mine.

Oran. I have no love but that which knits me to thee
With deeper love.

Alar. I found thee, Oran, what—
I will not say. And now thou art, good Oran,
A Prince's Castellan.

Oran. I feel thy bounty.

Alar. Thou shalt be more. But serve me as I would,
And thou shalt name thy meed.

Oran. To serve my Lord
Is my sufficient meed.

Alar. Come hither, Oran.
Were there a life between me and my life,
And all that makes that life a thing to cling to,
Love, Honour, Power, ay, what I will not name
Nor thou canst image—yet enough to stir
Ambition in the dead—I think, good Oran,
Thou would'st not see me foiled?

Oran. Thy glory's dearer
Than life to me.

Alar. I knew it, I knew it.
Thou shalt share all ; thy alien blood shall be
No bar to thy preferment. Hast thou brothers?
Go send for them. An aged sire perchance?
There's gold for him. Count it thyself. Contrive
All means of self-enjoyment. To the full
They shall lap up fruition. Thou hast, all have,
Some master wish which still eludes thy grasp,
And still's the secret idol of thy soul ;
'Tis gained. And only if thou dost, good Oran,
What love and duty prompt.

Oran. Count on my faith,
I stand prepared to prove it.

Alar. Good, good Oran !
It is an hour to midnight?

Oran. The moon is not
Within her midnight bower, yet near.

Alar. So late !
The Countess sleeps?

Oran. She has long retired.

Alar. She sleeps.

O she must wake no more!

Oran. Thy wife!

Alar. It must

Be done, ere yet the Castle chime shall tell

Night wanes.

Oran. Thy wife! God of my fathers! none

Can do this deed!

Alar. Upon thy hand it rests.

The deed must fall on thee.

Oran. I will not do it.

Alar. Thy oath, thy oath! Hast thou forgot thy oath?

Thou owest me a life, and now I claim it?

What, hast thou trifled with me? Hast thou fooled

With one whose point was at thy throat? Beware!

Thou art my slave, and I have branded thee

With this infernal ransom!

Oran. I am thy slave,

And I will be thy slave, and all my days

Devoted to perdition. Not for gold

Or worldly worth; to cheer no aged parent,

Though I have one, a mother; not to bask

My seed within thy beams; to feed no passions

And gorge no craving vanity; but because

Thou gavest me life, and led to that which made

That life for once delicious. O great Sir,

The King's thy foe? Surrounded by his guards

I would waylay him. Hast thou some fierce rival?

I'll pluck his heart out. Yea! there is no peril

I'd not confront, no rack I'll not endure,

No great offence commit, to do thee service—

So thou wilt spare me this, and spare thy soul

This unmatched sin.

Alar. I had exhausted suffering

Ere I could speak to thee. I claim thy oath.

Oran. One moment, yet one moment. This is sudden

As it is terrible.

Alar. The womb is ripe,

And thou art but the midwife of the birth

I have engendered.

Oran. Think how fair she is,
How gracious, how devoted!

Alar. Need I thee
To tell me what she is!

Oran. Thy children's mother.

Alar. Would she were not! Another breast should bear
My children.

Oran. Thou inhuman bloody man—
It shall not be, it cannot, cannot be.
I tell thee, tyrant, there's a power abroad
E'en now that crushes thee. The storm that raged
Blows from a mystic quarter. 'Tis the hand
Of Allah guides the tempest of this night.

Alar. Thine oath, thine oath!

Oran. Accursed be the hour
Thou sparedst my life!

Alar. Thine oath, I claim thine oath.
Nay, Moor, what is it? 'Tis a life, and thou
Hast learnt to rate existence at its worth.
A life, a woman's life! Why, sack a town,
And thousands die like her. My faithful Oran,
Come let me love thee, let me find a friend
When friends can prove themselves. Its not an oath
Vowed in our sunshine ease, that shows a friend;
'Tis the tempestuous mood like this, that calls
For faithful service.

Oran. Hah! the Emir's blood
Cries for this judgment. It was sacred seed.

Alar. It flowed to clear thine honour. Art thou he
That honour loved so dearly, that he scorned
Betrayal of a foe, although that foe
Had changed him to a bravo.

Oran. Let me kiss
Thy garment's hem, and grovel at thy feet.
I pray, I supplicate—my Lord, my Lord—
Absolve me from that oath!

Alar. I had not thought
To claim it twice. It seems I lacked some judgment
In man, to deem that honour might be found
In hired stabbers.

Oran. Hah! I vowed to thee
 A life for that which thou didst spare—'tis well.
 The debt is paid. [*Stabs himself and falls.*]

(*Enter the COUNTESS from the inner Chamber.*)

Coun. I cannot sleep—my dreams are full of woe!
 Alarcos! my Alarcos! Hah! dread sight!
Oran!

Oran. O, spare her; 'tis no sacrifice
 If she be spared.

Coun. Wild words! Thou dost not speak;
 O speak, Alarcos! speak!

Oran. His voice is death.

Coun. Ye Saints uphold me now, for I am weak
 And lost. What means this? *Oran* dying! Nay—
 Alarcos! I'm a woman. Aid me, aid me.
 Why's *Oran* thus? O save him, my Alarcos!
 Blood! And why shed? Why let us staunch his wounds?
 Why are there wounds? He will not speak. Alarcos,
 A word, a single word! Unhappy Moor!
 Where is thy hurt? [*Kneels by ORAN.*]

Oran. That hand! This is not death;
 'Tis Paradise. [*Dies.*]

Alar. (*advancing in soliloquy*). He sets me great examples.
 'Tis easier than I deemed; a single blow
 And his bold soul has fled. His lavish life
 Enlists me in quick service. Quit that dark corpse;
 He died as did become a perjured traitor.

Coun. To whom, my Lord?

Alar. To all Castille perchance.
 Come hither, wife. Before the morning breaks,
 A lengthened journey waits thee. Art prepared?

Coun. (*springing to ALARCOS*). I will not go. Alarcos,
 dear Alarcos.

Thy look is terrible! What mean these words?
 Why shouldst thou spare me? why should *Oran* die?
 The veil that clouds my mind—I'll rend it. Tell me—
 Yea! I'll know all. A power supports me now
 Defies even thee.

Alar. A traitor's troubled tongue

Disturbs thy mind. I tell thee, thou must leave
This castle promptly.

Coun. Not to Burgos—say
But that. I will not go. That fatal woman—
Her shadow's on thy soul.

Alar. No, not to Burgos.
'Tis not to Burgos that thy journey tends.
The children sleep?

Coun. Spite of the storm.

Alar. Go—kiss them.
Thou canst not take them with thee. To thy chamber—
Quick to thy chamber.

[*The COUNTESS as if about to speak, but ALARCOS stops her.*

Nay, time presses, wife—

[*The COUNTESS slowly re-enters her Chamber.*

Alar. I am alone—with Death. And will she look
Serene as this? The visage of a hero
Stamped with a martyred end! Thou noble Moor!
What if thy fate were mine! Thou art at rest:
No dark fulfilment waits o'er thee. The tomb
Hath many charms.

(*The COUNTESS calls*). Alarcos!

Alar. Ay, anon.
Why did she tell me that she lived? Methought
It was all past. I came to confront death;
And we have met. This sacrificial blood—
What, bears it no atonement? 'Twas an offering
Fit for the Gods. [*The midnight bell.*

She waits me now; her hand
Extends a diadem; my achieveless arm
Would wither at her scorn. 'Tis thus, Solisa,
I gain thy heart and realm!

[*ALARCOS moves hastily to the Chamber, which he enters; the stage for some seconds is empty; a shriek is then heard; ALARCOS re-appears, very pale, and slowly advances to the front of the Stage.*

'Tis over and I live. I heard a sound;

Was't Oran's spirit?
 I'll not rest here, and yet I dare not back.
 The bodies? Nay, 'tis done—I'll not shrink now.
 I have seen death before. But is this death?
 Methinks a deeper mystery. Well, 'tis done.
 There'll be no hour so dark as this. I would
 I had not caught her eye. [*A trumpet sounds.*
 The Warder's note?
 Shall I meet life again? [*Another trumpet sounds.*

(*Enter the SENESCHAL.*)

Sen. Horsemen from Court.
Alar. The Court! I'm sick at heart. Perchance she's
 eager,
 And cannot wait my coming.

(*Enter two COURTIERs.*)

Well, good Sirs!

1st Court. Alas, my Lord.

Alar. I live upon thy words.

What now?

1st Court. We have rode post, my Lord.

Alar. Bad news

Flies ever. 'Tis the King?

1st Court. Alas!

Alar. She's ill.

My horse, my horse there!

1st Court. Nay, my Lord, not so.

Alar. Why then I care for nought.

1st Court. Unheard-of horror!

The storm, the storm—

Alar. I rode in it.

1st Court. Methought

Each flash would fire the Citadel; the flame
 Wreathed round its pinnacles, and poured in streams
 Adown the pallid battlements. Our revellers
 Forgot their festival, and stopped to gaze
 On the portentous vision. When behold!
 The curtained clouds re-opened, and a bolt

Came winged from the startling blue of Heaven,
And struck—the Infanta!

Alar. There's a God of Vengeance.

1st Court. She fell a blighted corpse. Amid the shrieks
Of women, prayers of hurrying multitudes,
The panic and the stir—we sought for thee;
The King's o'erwhelmed.

Alar. My wife's at least a Queen;
She reigns in Heaven. The King's o'erwhelmed—poor
man!

Go tell him, Sirs, the Count Alarcos lived
To find a hell on earth; yet thus he sought
A deeper and a darker. [Falls.

The End.

THE STAR CHAMBER. THE DUNCIAD OF TO-DAY.

A SATIRE.

"FOOLS are my theme!"—indignant BYRON cried,
And vengeful Satire back'd the poet's pride.

Quench'd is that spirit now; long toss'd and torn,
At home distracted, and abroad forlorn,
Caprice and frenzy rack'd his feverish brain,
Till soothing Fancy shed her dew in vain.
Exil'd, he sought his home, and found his grave
Far in "those Edens of the Eastern wave,"
Which, stern and wild alike, but ne'er unstrung,
His heart had worshipp'd, and his lyre had sung.
His was the soul of might, the nerve that threw
Impassion'd grandeur o'er the scenes he drew;
Bade the bold son redeem his captive sire,
And lent reviving Greece a Briton's fire.

But mark how Dullness, like a ditch-fed toad,
Crawls sickening on, where Genius points the road!
Far as the poet roams, a servile train
Dogs him from ship to shore, from street to plain;
"Greece! Greece!" they cry,—that rallying signal heard,
Tombs, temples, altars, each hath found its bard;
For batter'd nymphs flow sonnets, songs, and odes,
And funeral elegies for headless gods.
"To arms! to arms!" each baby rhymester bawls,
"Athens, thy fleet—and Sparta, mann thy walls!"

"Now is the hour for generous souls to work,
 "Now strike for liberty, and damn the Turk!
 "Think of the glorious fight your fathers won
 "All on the plains of mighty Marathon.
 "And eke (the patriot schoolboy's favourite three)
 "Plateæa, Salamis, Thermopylæ!"

The tuneful train approach and disappear,
 HAYGARTH in front, and HEMANS in the rear;
 While, from Bengal red-hot, brave BURGESS draws
 Hibernia's bull-dogs to Bozzari's cause;
 They stamp, they chide, exhort, protest, and cry,
 Till PALLI soothes them with a lullaby!

Nor think by pilfer'd names, (ignoble cheat!)
 Your Laras, Harolds, shall escape the Fleet:
 O'er all alike one dark oblivion lours,
 Though WIFFEN warble in "Aonian Hours,"
 And MUDIE (courteous satirist!) devote
 His Attic Fragments to reform the Scot;
His Attic Fragments! 'faith, the name's well earn'd
 By odds and ends in Grub Street garrets churn'd!

And these have pass'd away; nor these alone
 Crept to their graves, unnotic'd and unknown;
 Fast as they fall, another shoot succeeds,
 For Dunces sprout by stealth—like other weeds;
 So frail, so delicate, that few (thank God!)
 Survive to claim the honour of the rod.

Dunces of every rank, and every age,
 In dotage silly, or in childhood sage;
 Whether in manly fight ye stand for fame,
 A book your shield, your crest a full-length name,
 Or, scarce secure, behind initials bask,
 Wearing, like Harlequin, but half a mask;
 Ye too, whose borrow'd garb would mock our view,
 But that your tails and pointed ears peep through;
 And last, ye modest Wits, who, great or small,
 Thanks to your prudence! print no name at all;

Haste!—if ye can, be heal'd, absolv'd in time,
 Whate'er your sickness, or whate'er your crime;
 Whether in woods of prose your axes ring,
 Or sink your pipkins in the Muses' spring;
 Bards, travellers, priests, must all my verse engage,
 And fret once more their minute on the stage.

In fustian clouds "be-buried steeple-high,"
 With head "a-fuddled," and "beer-pregnant eye,"
 TENNANT stockfull from Anster Fair appears,
 Whose "maggots fly-blow all our rotten ears!"
 The curtain drawn, "two dozen milkmaids" close
 With "polish'd tin-pails" round their Berwick foes,
 A "geminy of kings" tell tales before us,
 And wrangling lawyers chaunt in semichorus.

SHEPHERD OF ETTRICK!—fairy, elf, and sprite,
 Have danc'd to death the Minstrel Jacobite,
 Then laugh to turn the helpless bard afloat
 On Folly's stream, a novel for a boat;
 Yet own his rhymes (God bless the Baillie's friends!)
 Not quite so silly as the sheep he tends.

Soft lays by moonlight BARRY CORNWALL trills,
 Th' enamour'd swain of bow'rs, and rocks, and rills,
 Eyes, hair, and forehead—fishes, fawns, and birds—
 Delicious nonsense in a flood of words!
 Whate'er from Spain, Greece, Egypt, lures the sense,
 Rome, Brescia, Milan, Sicily, Provence,
 "Brows as Athenian marble pale," "white arms
 Like silver vapours," "currant lips," (O charms!)
 "Tresses that fall like things enamour'd," and
 "The rich mouth's perfum'd gates," at whose command
 "Float numbers from the breathed flute;" what grace,
 When "crimsoning beauty" bathes its "milkwhite face,"
 And "through the lattic'd leaves gusts of soft air
 Sigh, like perfume, o'er shoulders white," (or fair)—
 Such are thy songs, O CORNWALL; nor untold
 Miracles strange, how at the flood of old

"Wild horses shrilly spoke," (or neigh'd)—and "stout Men did grow white with famine,"—(or the gout).

Nor LEIGH forbears his hours in rhyme to waste,
Who, with more wit, more fancy, and more taste,
(His "View" and "Lines on Princess Charlotte" show it)
Would make a pretty tolerable poet.

Like ivy o'er churchyards, Friend BERNARD creeps,
Or in "Poetic Vigils" nods and sleeps;
Thought bows to thought, and rhyme to rhyme gives place,
Stiff as his garb, and formal as his pace.
And must thou lay thy lifeless limbs a-bed
'Neath the bare clod, where steps unholy tread?
Or would thy pen, for lack of "marble hearse,"
Like Horace raise a monument of verse?
Thy book shall be thy tombstone and declare,—
BARTON, THE QUAKER BARD, lies buried there!

In peacock's crest array'd, and peacock's coat,
In step as stately, and as shrill in throat,
Terrific MILMAN breathes the pomp of sound,
"His eloquent pen pregnant with thought profound;"
Self-smitten monarchs strut, and spout, and stare,
And wond'ring courtiers cry—"How fine we are!"
Wond'ring, forsooth, how 'tis they hear and speak
The liquid harmony of British Greek.

HEMANS! how noble sounds that name succinct!
And why not Mrs.? Is the word extinct?
Her "partial friends" th' unseemly tittle drop,
And talk of HEMANS as they talk of POPE.
'Tis well; on lighter, loftier wings she flies,
Since dreary Dartmoor won the royal prize;
And now no more she weaves with woofs and warps
Funereal dirges o'er a suckling's corpse,
But plays with sieges, battles, bridges, bogs,
"As maids of thirteen do with puppy dogs."
Then high on eagle's cloud-tipp'd pinion soar,
Leave love to LANDON, mysteries to MORE;

O'er women triumph, and with men compete,
In all, save poetry, a bard complete !

Nor pass unnotic'd the "fine-minded" lay,
To "Memory" dear, to Love, to ALARIC A,
Weaver of "New Year's Gifts," ingenious WATTS,
Of "Souvenirs," "Albums," and "Forget-Me-Nots ;"
Without thee "Amulets" were a charmless jest,
And "Friendship's Offering" but a hoax at best ;
Idolator of grass-plots, lawns, and trees,
Slave of a sunbeam, panting for a breeze,
Captive alike of flow'rets and the fair,
A bed of cowslips, or a lock of hair !

Who hath not heard, amid thy sons and daughters,
Bath, great metropolis of fops and waters,
Of him, thy pump-room poet, from whose throat
Flow stanzas sweet as Music's sweetest note ?
And happy he, whose nightly fare's no worse
Than BISHOP'S Melodies, and BAILY'S Verse ;
Though puff'd Aladdin was a scurvy trick,
And "Songs to Rosa" make me very sick.

And who is ROSE?—the sleekest of old men,
Heir to MATILDA'S talents, name, and pen ;
Who, from Italia's beds and mud-baths sprung,
(Italia, fam'd for poesy and dung !)
Than Pæstum's flow'rs more fruitful and more dear,
In MURRAY'S greenhouse blooms four times a-year.
Misguided STEWART ! to thy Muse return,
Weave the last wreath for ARIOSTO'S urn ;
And on one shelf lest man and master sleep,
Thy butler COSNETT to his sideboard keep :
Or if his rebel hand, like thine, must blot
Its share of goodly foolscap, praise him not,
Nor prove how apt thy will, thy strength how vain,
To foster Granby, or to fell Tremaine.

Time was, when language gave th' impress of mind,
Not bare like rocks, nor hollow like the wind ;

When pithy words with rigid sense were fraught,
 Alike if SPENCER sung, or BACON taught;
 Now cold and marrowless as Banquo's ghost,
 Like streamlets in their own meanders lost,
 Words after words, an endless maze, ensue,
 Without one thread of thought to guide the wanderer
 through.

Fancy, blest maid! so oft invok'd in vain,
 Flies our chill clime in brighter realms to reign,
 Or, quench'd her torch, and loos'd her ancient spell,
 In child-like dalliance plays with L. E. L.
 See how the cold idea, ripe and rife,
 Peeps from its mist, and struggles into life;
 Howe'er its end protracted, still seen through,
 Fine as a cobweb, and as flimsy too;
 Betrays its starveling limbs, all skin and bone,
 And, like an old man's ague, shivers on.
 Say, Sappho, say, why thus thy fancy leans
 To half-grown boys, and misses in their teens?
 Why thus thy chiefs and simpering maids outshame
 The mawkish mulings of a school-girl's flame?
 For them no more in shifting tune rehearse
 The dull varieties of slipshod verse;
 In vain, 'midst pause abrupt, and tame conceit,
 Th' official dactyl shakes its palsied feet;
 Tir'd of eight syllables, in vain thy line
 Now halts on sev'n, now hobbles into nine;
 The tale, the tone, with fatal treachery tell,
 What once was LANDON, now is L. E. L.
 A very Butterfly, poor flies among,
 Queen-bee of Love, and Lady-bird of Song.

By Fashion fir'd, the Morning Herald lays
 On E. L. E. its laureate cap and bays,
 O'er the wide walks of alphabet to rule,
 Elect "SUB-MISTRESS OF TH' INITIAL SCHOOL,"
 And bids your hearts be heav'd, your pearl-drops shed,
 For Misses W. and Masters Z.
 Mutes and soft liquids on the field embrace,
 And run in pairs distinction's novel race;

Ambitious DELTA quits his A, B, C,
 And, short for Dunce, subscribes a Greecian D ;
 While DOUBLE-S omits, in haste for fame,
 Th' initial vowel that completes his name.

Thus spreads example like a new-born pest,
 And Art becomes but mimicry at best ;
 Not unpolluted CAMPBELL'S muse remains,
 To "Memory's Pleasures" must succeed its "Pains ;"
 Old fashion'd fops and spruce Lotharios pour
 "Romaunts" with SCOTT, and amorous songs with
 MOORE ;

E'en classic MILMAN has a kind of clan,
 As every harlot keeps her favourite man.
 Some chuse their game, some pick what they can get,
 And all is fish that comes within the net ;
 Till pinch'd and push'd at last, the plodding elves,
 Their neighbours beggar'd, fairly strip themselves.
 But most, when bards in noonday vigour fall,
 (For bards are merely mortals after all,)
 Mockeries, erewhile by bolder knaves begun,
 Through lurking louts and petty pilferers run,
 From hand to hand like soap-sud bladders fly,
 And bubble, bubble, bubble, till they die.

As when by winds subdu'd, and swift decay,
 (Rear'd, like its lord, and ruin'd in a day)
 Fell the proud boast of WYATT'S Gothic skill,
 Thy air-built tow'rs and vaulted roofs, Fonthill !
 Some fled, some stood aghast, and some admir'd,
 Like FARQUHAR scar'd, like JEFFERSON inspir'd,
 Hants, Wilts, and Dorset, lift their heads around,
 And mountains, molehills, gape to catch the sound ;
 Echo on echo dances far and wide,
 Faint and more faint,—a voice, and nought beside !

GODDESS of arts, of pleasure, and of dress,
 Of courts and clubs, the palace and the press,
 Fond of the passing moment—till it's past—
 And deeming each more lovely than the last ;

Inconstant, charming, false, delightful queen,
In fancy restless, yet in form serene,
Bewitching Fashion! though to swell thy train
The wealthless toil, the graceless fret in vain,
Still thousands struggle 'gainst thy barriers clos'd,
And boldly hazard life—to be expos'd;
Proud but to breathe the tainted air of state,
And ape the noise and nonsense of the great;
Prone to believe, and anxious to declare,
A great man's shadow has a lordly air!
Behold, the cassock'd priest, in snow-white stock,
Soothes with soft sermons his patrician flock;
The Templar next his virgin brief unfurls,
Waves his new gown, and shakes his dusty curls;
Courier of Fate, extinguisher of breath,
The supple doctor leads the "Dance of Death;"
Plays with a lady's pulse to show, vain thing!
His watch, his wisdom, and his diamond ring:
While she on pillow'd couch, with sigh and fee,
Nurtures the darling malady—*ennui*;
Content to taste, and dream, and sip, and read,
New novels, hyson, love, and mustard-seed!
But most advance on Fashion's crowded stage
The zealous witlings of this letter'd age:
One scents the game, and they who noses lack
Yell like the rest, and scamper with the pack;
All join in cry, no matter who began,
Man mimics master, master mimics man.
Hence empty words, that "cold and senseless grown!"—
Or coarse or delicate—are words alone!
See how with palsied, amorous strain intrudes
The lisping eunuch of enamour'd prudes;
See how the pension'd placeman's poor paltroon
Swears, sweats, and swaggers, like a Dutch dragoon;
See how the lyric eagle (voice sublime!)
Melts into blank, or maddens into rhyme;
Big with huge bubbles, odes on epodes press,
Begin with nought, and end with somewhat less.

Enough ! enough !—the world must sin its way,
 Rome twenty centuries since, and we to-day ;
 From age to age the critic's cry descends,
 Began with HORACE, nor with BYRON ends.
 Why wreak our wrath on all the insect fry,
 From glowing WEBSTER down to melting TIGHE ?
 At STRANGFORD'S coinage let the vulgar stare,
 Tremble with CUNNINGHAM, or sob with CLARE ;
 FITZGERALD start to life each twelfth of June,
 (O ! that such meetings should return so soon !)
 HARLEY his Nonsense print,—as many do,—
 And own it Nonsense,—which is done by few.
 Italia's twofold tongue let WRANGHAM try,
 O'er HORACE drivel, and with PETRARCH sigh ;
 And, all too fine for London cookery, dress
 One hundred copies at Lee Priory press.
 Let SHERGOLD BOONE, who scorn'd collegiate bays,
 From toothless satire sink to nerveless praise ;
 HERBERT, like loaded wain, toil onward still,
 As his own Helga, comfortless and chill ;
 CONDER sing sermons, MAXWELL tales of blood,
 And LYNDSEY dramas fated from the flood ;
 Who cares if GOWER tempt th' offended gods,
 TOWNSEND with Pæans, RICHARDSON with odes,
 Subjoining wisely, e'er their flattery cools,
 Fourscore encomiums from as many fools ?
 Who cares for JOYCE, HYDE, SULLIVAN,—or you,
 ROLLS, BOWRING, CARRINGTON, DOWNES, WIL-
 SON, THEW ?
 Sons of the rod confest, whose very name
 Were just enough to damn you into fame ;
 For MEDWIN writhing 'neath the critic's smart,
 Or READ expiring of a " Broken Heart ?"
 Let CROLY print for fame, and LEE for bread,
 Plays not intended to be played—or read ;
 CAMPBELL, brave bard, from OSSIAN'S spell break
 loose,
 And tune his bagpipe to the " Birth of Bruce " ;
 WEFFEN and HUNT, (alas, poor TASSO'S fate !)
 What some call, "*murder*,"—and what some, "*translate*."

Or why the drama's freaks and fooleries trace,
 The Frenchman's triumph, and our own disgrace?
 Why note the tawdry scenes, the tinsel show,
 Where glasses glitter, and gas-lanterns glow?
 Where boats of paper throng the pasteboard shore,
 And torrents thunder down the dark trap-door?
 Christmas! not thine alone, as once, the time
 Devote to children's Punch and Pantomime;
 Short was the reign of genies, witches, sprites,
 E'en Mother Goose but lived her forty nights;
 Now fairies sing, and devils dance to hear
 Their charter'd reign extends from year to year;
 Old Nick renews with joy the sorcerer's bond,
 And charms with twelve-month's spell his batter'd wand;
 Clown, Pantaloon, their monstrous maws regale,
 And Wantley's Dragon wags his brittle tail.

O Drury, Drury! should a second fire
 E'er swallow thee, as once it gulp'd thy sire,
 May I stand by, and, heedless of thy screams,
 Like Quixote's barber, feed the glowing flames!
 "Take, take," I'd cry, "what generous fate awards,
 From Critic hands a hetacomb of bards.
 Lo! at thy altar, sinking pile, are plac'd
 The choicest dainties of dramatic taste.
 Priests of the Stage, what have we here? begin!—
 Mirandola by CORNWALL!—hurl it in!
 This CROLY'S Cataline, "Love's Victory" this,
 And here "The Carib Chief" by HORACE TWISS.
 SHIEL, SHIEL again! the dullest dolt in print,—
 Here's "Ramah Droog"—beware! there's powder in't.
 A lord! a lord!—what means that noise and bustle?
 "Don Carlos, Sir, a tragedy by RUSSELL."
 "Juan in Ireland!"—zounds, a precious dunce!
 But good as new,—'t was only acted once.
 Here's SHEE'S Alasco—hold! the fellow brav'd
 GEORGE COLMAN'S puny spite—let him be sav'd.
 Light as a leaf—your "Conscience," MR. HAYNES;
 Heavy as lead—a tragedy of PAYNE'S;

BUCKE!—what of him? “Th’ Italians”—to the fire,
Though with him “Nature’s Harmonies” expire;
Here’s the “Stout Gentleman,”—make way, make way,—
And “Pride shall have a Fall,”—this very day!

O! what a list through Glory’s trump to squeak,
And drown poor England in discordant shriek!
England! no more submit, like jaded hack,
That knaves should flog, or fools should pat thy back;
No more thy fading fame in silence see,
Blush for thy blockheads ere they blush for thee.
But, oh! how faint thy lonely stars appear,
Wrapt in the mists they strive in vain to clear;
Round the bright path impervious Dullness flings
Its sombre veil, and opes its murky wings.

Magician CRABBE! perchance one golden key,
Opening the gate of tears, was giv’n to thee;
Nor shrinks the soul enfeebled; let thine art
Drain the flush’d eye, and probe the shudd’ring heart,
Nor judge the verse that bids the insensate feel,
Too bitter poison, or o’er-tempered steel.

CAMPBELL, for shame! thy paltry trade forego,
Leave Magazines to COLBURN, SMITH & CO.;
Theodric, weazen child, to own disdain,
Write for renown, and be thyself again!

ROGERS awake! and own that cold neglect
Chills not the bosom, though the hand be checked;
’Twas thine to sing how trembles Human Life,
As prone to joy or sorrow, peace or strife;
Some few perchance have listened, and for such
Re-string the chords thy hand alone may touch;
One heart-felt sigh that fears to weep aloud,
Is worth ten thousand plaudits of the crowd.

Meek without flattery, bold without pretence,
Who taught that Fancy spurns not Common Sense,

Neglected WILSON wings his lonely flight,
Bright as a rainbow, whimsical as bright;
Where pale Disease draws pestilential breath,
And London sorrows o'er the bed of death.

Forlorn MONTGOMERY, is thy spirit fled?
Enchanting CAREY, are thy laurels dead?
Smiles not for thee Italia's flowery way?
Shall none but DANTE tempt thy steps to stray?
Lo! MITCHELL bids thy trembling hand aspire,
And share with him the Athenian's Comic lyre.

And deem not ye, who kneel at SHAKSPEARE'S
throne,
From Britain's stage her last of poets flown.
KNOWLES yet survives, the OTWAY of his age,
Sole prop and honour of our falling stage;
Let British eyes Rome's mighty moral view,
And British tears confess that moral true.
The Tribune's lust,—he feels and feeds its growth,—
The slave—the pander—shall they scorn an oath?
The virgin's fall—this, this alone, could save,—
Th' avenging parent claims the life he gave;
Stifles in death the coward caitiff's cries,
Bewilder'd clasps his frantic brain, and dies!

Nor less the Tragic Muse, august and free,
Turns, youthful BEDDOES, anxious turns to thee;
Language of love, long lost, thy scenes restore,
And passion breathes in poetry once more;
Resume the task thy boyhood lov'd so well,
And deign (no mean submission!) to excel.

Dark rose the day on him, and dark it lour'd,
Whose dying notes from famish'd lips were pour'd;
Who grasp'd the Theban shell, and struck a tone
No master yet had wakened—save its own.
Sad was his lot; nor slow the tear that greets
Thy blighted triumph, young ENDYMION KEATS;

Dawning once more, thy heathen Heaven displays
Ideal fabrics to th' enthusiast's gaze ;
All the bright dreams those fancied realms dispense,
And all on earth that charms the waking sense,
The spangled air, the heavens of fretted gold,
Grey ocean teeming with its wrecks of old,
Bow'r and cool fountain, lawn and shadowy grove,
Fair as the Spring, and sweet as Dian's love.
Indignant Sience saw and mourned her son,
She mark'd his honour, as his grave, her own !

But lost, too early lost, her favourite child
One halo cast o'er Erin's lonely wild,
Then bow'd his head ; no funeral knell was rung,
No requiem chaunted from his country's tongue,
But stern and just, impartial Virtue gave
A life in poverty, in peace a grave.
Rous'd at the tale, forthwith Renown arose,
Which, cold through life, from buried genius grows ;
As the lone flow'r that decks the barren heath
When pluck'd and wither'd yields its sweetest breath :
Whilst he who lov'd the bard respects the bier,
And sheds o'er martyr'd WOLFE a Christian's tear.

THE YOUNG DUKE.

I.

Childe Dacre stands in his father's hall,
While all the rest are dancing ;
Childe Dacre gazes on the wall,
While brightest eyes are glancing.
Then prythee tell me, gentles gay !
What makes our Childe so dull to-day ?

II.

I cannot tell, unless it be,
While all the rest are dancing,
The Lady Alice, on the sea,
With brightest eyes is glancing,
Or muses on the twilight hour
Will bring Childe Dacre to her bower.

III.

Childe Dacre hears the curfew chime,
While all the rest are dancing ;
Unless I find a fitting rhyme,
Oh ! here ends my romancing !
But see ! her lover's at her feet !
Oh ! words of joy ! oh ! meeting sweet !

IV.

Then let us hope, when next I sing,
And all the rest are dancing,
Our Childe a gentle bride may bring,
All other joys enhancing.
Then we will bless the twilight hour
That call'd him to a lady's bower.

FROM "THE YOUNG DUKE."

I.

Charming Bignetta! charming Bignetta!
What a gay little girl is charming Bignetta!
 She dances, she prattles,
 She rides and she rattles;
But she always is charming, that charming Bignetta!

II.

Charming Bignetta! charming Bignetta!
What a wild little witch is charming Bignetta!
 When she smiles, I'm all madness;
 When she frowns, I'm all sadness;
But she always is smiling, that charming Bignetta!

III.

Charming Bignetta! charming Bignetta!
What a wicked young rogue is charming Bignetta!
 She laughs at my shyness,
 And flirts with his Highness;
Yet still she is charming, that charming Bignetta!

IV.

Charming Bignetta! charming Bignetta!
What a dear little girl is charming Bignetta!
 'Think me only a sister,'
 Said she trembling: I kissed her.
What a charming young sister is charming Bignetta!

FROM "ALROY."

I.

He rose in beauty like the morn
That brightens in our Syrian skies ;
Dark Passion glittered in his eye,
And Empire sparkled in his form !

II.

My soul ! thou art the dusky earth,
On which his sunlight fell ;
The dusky earth, that dim no longer,
Now breathes with light, now beams with love !

III.

He rose in beauty, like the morn
That brightens in our Syrian skies ;
Dark Passion glittered in his eye,
And Empire sparkled in his form !

THE SONG OF CALIDAS.

Drink, drink, deeply drink,
Never feel, and never think ;
What's love ? what's fame ? a sigh, a smile.
Friendship ? but a hollow wile.
If you've any thought or woe,
Drown them in the goblet's flow.
Yes ! dash them in this brimming cup ;
Dash them in, and drink them up.
Drink, drink, deeply drink,
Never feel, and never think.

FROM "VENETIA."

ON THE NIGHT OUR DAUGHTER WAS BORN.

I.

Within our heaven of love, the new-born star
 We long devoutly watched, like shepherd kings,
 Steals into light, and, floating from afar,
 Methinks some bright transcendent seraph sings,
 Waving with flashing light her radiant wings,
 Immortal welcome to the stranger fair:
 To us a child is born. With transport clings
 The mother to the babe she sighed to bear;
 Of all our treasured loves the long-expected heir!

II.

My daughter! can it be a daughter now
 Shall greet my being with her infant smile?
 And shall I press that fair and taintless brow
 With my fond lips, and tempt, with many a wile
 Of playful love, those features to beguile
 A parent with their mirth? In the wild sea
 Of this dark life, behold a little isle
 Rises amid the waters, bright and free,
 A haven for my hopes of fond security!

III.

And thou shalt bear a name my line has loved,
 And their fair daughters owned for many an age,
 Since first our fiery blood a wanderer roved,
 And made in sunnier lands his pilgrimage,
 Where proud defiance with the waters wage
 The sea-born city's walls; the graceful towers
 Loved by the bard and honoured by the sage!
 My own VENETIA now shall gild our bowers,
 And with her spell enchain our life's enchanted hours!

IV.

Oh ! if the blessing of a father's heart
Hath aught of sacred in its deep-breath'd prayer,
Skilled to thy gentle being to impart,
As thy bright form itself, a fate as fair ;
On thee I breathe that blessing ! Let me share,
O God ! her joys ; and if the dark behest
Of woe resistless, and avoidless care,
Hath not gone forth, oh ! spare this gentle guest,
And wreak thy needful wrath on my resigned breast !

FROM "VENETIA."

I.

Within a cloistered pile, whose Gothic towers
 Rose by the margin of a sedgy lake,
 Embosomed in a valley of green bowers,
 And girt by many a grove and ferny brake
 Loved by the antlered deer, a tender youth
 Whom Time to childhood's gentle sway of love
 Still spared ; yet innocent as is the dove,
 Nor wounded yet by care's relentless tooth ;
 Stood musing, of that fair antique domain
 The orphan lord ! And yet, no childish thought
 With wayward purpose holds its transient reign
 In his young mind, with deeper feelings fraught ;
 Then mystery all to him, and yet a dream,
 That Time has touched with its revealing beam.

II.

There came a maiden to that lonely boy,
 And like to him as is the morn to night ;
 Her sunny face a very type of joy,
 And with her soul's unclouded lustre bright.
 Still scantier summers had her brow illumed
 Than that on which she threw a witching smile,
 Unconscious of the spell that could beguile
 His being of the burthen it was doomed
 By his ancestral blood to bear : a spirit,
 Rife with desponding thoughts and fancies drear,
 A moody soul that men sometimes inherit,
 And worse than all the woes the world may hear.
 But when he met that maiden's dazzling eye,
 He bade each gloomy image baffled fly.

III.

Amid the shady woods and sunny lawns
The maiden and the youth now wander, gay
As the bright birds, and happy as the fawns,
Their sportive rivals, that around them play;
Their light hands linked in love, the golden hours
Unconscious fly, while thus they graceful roam,
And careless ever till the voice of home
Recalled them from their sunshine and their flowers;
For then they parted: to his lonely pile
The orphan-chief, for though his woe to lull,
The maiden called him brother, her fond smile
Gladdened another hearth, while his was dull.
Yet as they parted, she reproved his sadness,
And for his sake she gaily whispered gladness.

IV.

She was the daughter of a noble race,
That beauteous girl, and yet she owed her name
To one who needs no herald's skill to trace
His blazoned lineage, for his lofty fame
Lives in the mouth of men, and distant climes
Re-echo his wide glory; where the brave
Are honoured, where 'tis noble deemed to save
A prostrate nation, and for future times
Work with a high devotion, that no taunt,
Or ribald lie, or zealot's eager curse,
Or the short-sighted world's neglect can daunt,
That name is worshipped! His immortal verse
Blends with his god-like deeds, a double spell
To bind the coming age he loved too well!

V.

For, from his ancient home, a scatterling,
They drove him forth, unconscious of their prize,
And branded as a vile unhallowed thing,
The man who struggled only to be wise.
And even his hearth rebelled, the duteous wife,
Whose bosom well might soothe in that dark hour,

Swelled with her gentle force the world's harsh power,
And aimed her dart at his devoted life
That struck ; the rest his mighty soul might scorn,
But when his household gods averted stood,
'Twas the last pang that cannot well be borne
When tortured e'en to torpor, his heart's blood
Flowed to the unseen blow : then forth he went,
And gloried in his ruthless banishment.

VI.

A new-born pledge of love within his home,
His alien home, the exiled father left ;
And when, like Cain, he wandered forth to roam,
A Cain without his solace, all bereft,
Stole down his pallid cheek the scalding tear,
To think a stranger to his tender love
His child must grow, untroubled where might rove
His restless life, or taught perchance to fear
Her father's name, and bred in sullen hate,
Shrink from his image. Thus the gentle maid,
Who with her smiles had soothed an orphan's fate,
Had felt an orphan's pang ; yet undismayed,
Though taught to deem her sire the child of shame,
She clung with instinct to that reverent name !

VII.

Time flew ; the boy became a man ; no more
His shadow falls upon his cloistered hall,
But to a stirring world he learn'd to pour
The passion of his being, skilled to call
From the deep caverns of his musing thought
Shadows to which they bowed, and on their mind
To stamp the image of his own ; the wind,
Though all unseen, with force or odour fraught,
Can sway mankind, and thus a poet's voice,
Now touched with sweetness, now inflamed with rage,
Though breath, can make us grieve and then rejoice :
Such is the spell of his creative page,

That blends with all our moods ; and thoughts can yield
That all have felt, and yet till then were sealed.

VIII.

The lute is sounding in a chamber bright
With a high festival ; on every side,
Soft in the gleamy blaze of mellowed light,
Fair women smile, and dancers graceful glide ;
And words still sweeter than a serenade
Are breathed with guarded voice and speaking eyes,
By joyous hearts in spite of all their sighs ;
But bye-gone fantasies that ne'er can fade
Retain the pensive spirit of the youth ;
Reclined against a column he surveys
His laughing compeers with a glance, in sooth,
Careless of all their mirth : for other days
Enchain him with their vision, the bright hours
Passed with the maiden in their sunny bowers.

IX.

Why turns his brow so pale, why starts to life
That languid eye ? What form before unseen,
With all the spells of hallowed memory rife,
Now rises on his vision ? As the Queen
Of Beauty from her bed of sparkling foam
Sprang to the azure light, and felt the air,
Soft as her cheek, the wavy dancers bear
To his rapt sight a mien that calls his home,
His cloistered home, before him, with his dreams
Prophetic strangely blending. The bright muse
Of his dark childhood still divinely beams
Upon his being ; glowing with the hues
That painters love, when raptured pencils soar
To trace a form that nations may adore !

X.

One word alone, within her thrilling ear,
Breathed with hushed voice the brother of her heart,
And that for aye is hidden. With a tear

Smiling she strove to conquer, see her start,
The bright blood rising to her quivering cheek,
And meet the glance she hastened once to greet,
When not a thought had he, save in her sweet
And solacing society ; to seek
Her smiles his only life ! Ah ! happy prime
Of cloudless purity, no stormy fame
His unknown sprite then stirred, a golden time
Worth all the restless splendour of a name ;
And one soft accent from those gentle lips
Might all the plaudits of a world eclipse.

XI.

My tale is done ; and if some deem it strange
My fancy thus should droop, deign then to learn
My tale is truth : imagination's range
Its bounds exact may touch not : to discern
Far stranger things than poets ever feign,
In life's perplexing annals, is the fate
Of those who act, and musing, penetrate
The mystery of Fortune : to whose reign
The haughtiest brow must bend ; 'twas passing strange
The youth of these fond children ; strange the flush
Of his high fortunes and his spirit's change ;
Strange was the maiden's tear, the maiden's blush ;
Strange were his musing thoughts and trembling heart,
'Tis strange they met, and stranger if they part !

SPRING IN THE APENNINES.

I.

Spring in the Apennine now holds her court
Within an amphitheatre of hills,
Clothed with the blooming chestnut ; musical
With murmuring pines, waving their light green cones
Like youthful Bacchants ; while the dewy grass,
The myrtle and the mountain violet,
Blend their rich odours with the fragrant trees,
And sweeten the soft air. Above us spreads
The purple sky, bright with the unseen sun
The hills yet screen, although the golden beam
Touches the topmost boughs, and tints with light
The grey and sparkling crags. The breath of morn
Still lingers in the valley ; but the bee
With restless passion hovers on the wing,
Waiting the opening flower, of whose embrace
The sun shall be the signal. Poised in air,
The winged minstrel of the liquid dawn,
The lark, pours forth his lyric, and responds
To the fresh chorus of the sylvan doves,
The stir of branches and the fall of streams,
The harmonies of nature !

II.

Gentle Spring !

Once more, oh, yes ! once more I feel thy breath,
And charm of renovation ! To the sky
Thou bringest light, and to the glowing earth
A garb of grace : but sweeter than the sky
That hath no cloud, and sweeter than the earth
With all its pageantry, the peerless boon
Thou bearest to me, a temper like thine own ;

A springlike spirit, beautiful and glad!
Long years, long years of suffering, and of thought
Deeper than woe, had dimmed the eager eye
Once quick to catch thy brightness, and the ear
That lingered on thy music, the harsh world
Had jarred. The freshness of my life was gone,
And hope no more an omen in thy bloom
Found of a fertile future! There are minds,
Like lands, but with one season, and that drear;
Mine was eternal winter!

III.

A dark dream
Of hearts estranged, and of an Eden lost
Entranced my being; one absorbing thought,
Which, if not torture, was a dull despair
That agony were light to. But while sad
Within the desert of my life I roamed,
And no sweet springs of love gushed for to greet
My wearied heart, behold two spirits came
Floating in light, seraphic ministers,
The semblance of whose splendour on me fell
As on some dusky stream the matin ray,
Touching the gloomy waters with its life.
And both were fond, and one was merciful!
And to my home long forfeited they bore
My vagrant spirit, and the gentle hearth,
I reckless fled, received me with its shade
And pleasant refuge. And our softened hearts
Were like the twilight, when our very bliss
Calls tears to soothe our rapture; as the stars
Steal forth, then shining smiles their trembling ray
Mixed with our tenderness; and love was there
In all his manifold forms; the sweet embrace,
And thrilling pressure of the gentle hand,
And silence speaking with the melting eye!

IV.

And now again I feel thy breath, O spring!
And now the seal hath fallen from my gaze,

And thy wild music in my ready ear
Finds a quick echo ! The discordant world
Mars not thy melodies ; thy blossoms now
Are emblems of my heart ; and through my veins
The flow of youthful feeling, long pent up,
Glides like thy sunny streams ! In this fair scene,
On forms still fairer I my blessing pour ;
On her the beautiful, the wise, the good,
Who learnt the sweetest lesson to forgive ;
And on the bright-eyed daughter of our love,
Who soothed a mother, and a father saved !

FROM "HENRIETTA TEMPLE."

THE DESERTED.

I.

Yes, weeping is madness,
Away with this tear,
Let no sign of sadness
Betray the wild anguish I fear.
When we meet him to-night,
Be mute then my heart!
And my smile be as bright,
As if we were never to part.

II.

Girl! give me the mirror
That said I was fair;
Alas! fatal error,
This picture reveals my despair.
Smiles no longer can pass
O'er this faded brow,
And I shiver this glass,
Like his love and his fragile vow!

A SERENADE OF SEVILLE.

I.

Come forth, come forth, the star we love
Is high o'er Guadalquivir's grove,
And tints each tree with golden light;
Ah! Rosalie, one smile from thee were far more bright.

II.

Come forth, come forth, the flowers that fear
To blossom in the sun's career
The moonlight with their odours greet;
Ah! Rosalie, one sigh from thee were far more sweet!

III.

Come forth, come forth, one hour of night,
When flowers are fresh and stars are bright,
Were worth an age of gaudy day;
Then, Rosalie, fly, fly to me, nor longer stay!

CAPTAIN ARMINE'S SONG.

I.

My heart is like a silent lute
Some faithless hand has thrown aside;
Those chords are dumb, those tones are mute,
That once sent forth a voice of pride!
Yet even o'er the lute neglected
The wind of heaven will sometimes fly,
And even thus the heart dejected,
Will sometimes answer to a sigh!

II.

And yet to feel another's power
May grasp the prize for which I pine,
And others now may pluck the flower
I cherished for this heart of mine!
No more, no more! The hand forsaking,
The lute must fall, and shivered lie
In silence: and my heart thus breaking,
Responds not even to a sigh.

FROM "THE SPEAKING HARLEQUIN."

COLOMBINE'S RITORNELLA.

I.

Now is the hour
To leave thy bower,
And wander in these gardens bright;
All that is fairest
On earth, and rarest,
Meet in these starry halls to-night.
Now is the hour
To leave thy bower,
And wander in these gardens bright.

II.

But oh! the fairest,
And oh! the rarest,
Will seem but dull without thy light;—
Then hasten, sweetest,
For time is fleetest,
And give thy beauty to our sight.
Now is the hour
To leave thy bower,
And wander in these gardens bright.

